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THE

MOTHER'S RECOMPENSE

A Sequel

TO

HOME INFLUENCE.

BY

GRACE AGUILAR,

AUTHOR OF "THE VALE OF CEDARS," "WOMAN'S FRIENDSHIP," "HOME INFLUENCE," "THE WOMEN OF ISRAEL," ETC.

NEW YORK:
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1871.

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Miss Gertrude E. Mallard
Dec 16 1927

PREFACE.

THE domestic story of "Home Influence," and its Sequel, the present volume, were written in the early part of the year 1836, and the entire work was completed when its author was little above the age of nineteen; and, although no portion of it was published till some years after its composition, but little alteration was made in the original plan.

The labors of my dear child were unceasing, and from the hour when she could read, it may truly be stated that she learned to write; her contributions to the current literature of the day, her valuable works upon religious subjects, and others of a lighter character, most of which have been reprinted in other lands, all testify to a mind of no common stamp; and here, in reply to numerous questions relative to her literary remains, I may state that Grace Aguilar has left many excellent works in manuscript, both in prose and verse; some of which may, at a future day, be presented to the public.

I have been induced to publish "The Mother's Recompense," in compliance with the repeated solicitations of many friends, but in doing so I feel it incumbent on me to state that, unlike its predecessor, it has not received the advantage of that correction, which

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later years and ripened judgment would doubtless have cast around it. A long and fatal illness prevented its revision for the press; the circumstances of which will be found detailed in a short memoir, accompanying the last edition of "Home Influence." The universal voice of praise, which attended the publication of that work, it was not permitted her to enjoy,—an all-wise Creator called her to himself.

It was ever my dear child's wish to aid, by the example of her pen, the Education of the Heart. It was her desire, in the truthful exemplification of character, to point out to the youthful of her own sex the paths of rectitude and virtue. The same kindly love—the same heartfelt charity—the same spirit of devotion, which breathes through every line in "Home Influence," will be found pervading the pages of the present work.

If, then, the Home Education of the Hamilton Family be well traced and faithfully delineated in "Home Influence," a Tale for Mothers and Daughters, its *effect* will be found illustrated in the "Mother's Recompense;" there, as its dear author writes, will still further be portrayed the cares, anxieties, and ultimate reward of maternal love.

SARAH AGUILAR.

December, 1850.

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THE MOTHER'S RECOMPENSE.

CHAPTER I.

From Emmeline Hamilton to Mary Greville.

LONDON, January, 18--.

AT length, dearest Mary, I may write to you; at length indulge my long-controlled wishes. My conscience has given me permission now, though I once thought I never could again. We parted in August, and it is now January; and except during our little tour, you have not had one line from me, but very many more than one from Caroline and Ellen. I used to wrong them, but I am glad I adhered to mamma's advice and my resolution, painful as it has been; for it did seem hard that I, who consider myself even more my dear Mary's own friend, should not address you when my sister and cousin did. And now to explain this riddle, for though mamma has excused my silence to you, I am quite sure she has not told you the real truth. She would not expose my silly weakness, and therefore prepare yourself for a most humiliating confession, which will, in all probability, lower me ten degrees in your estimation. However, truth must be told, and so it shall be, with all the necessary regularity and precision. *You* know, almost better than any one else, how very much I disliked the thought of leaving dear happy Oakwood, and residing any part of the year in London. You often used to warn me, when I have thus spoken, against permitting such fancies to obtain too much dominion; but I did not follow your advice, dear Mary, but indulged them till, of course, they became so heightened that the last month of our sojourn at Oakwood was embittered by the anticipation. I saw you thought me foolish, and I knew that mamma and papa's plans could not be altered to please my fancy, and that my confessed distaste to them would give pain to both: therefore, I concealed my dislike, but instead of doing all I could to conquer it, encouraged every gloomy anticipation to the very utmost. I found, during our delightful tour through the south of England, I could enjoy myself, but still the

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thoughts of London, and masters, and strangers, and the fancy our style of living would be so different in the metropolis to what it was at Oakwood, and that I should not see nearly as much of mamma, all chose to come, like terrifying spectres, to scare away the present pleasure.

We visited Oxford, although completely out of our way, in order that we might see the residence of my brothers. There Percy's wild mirth and eloquent descriptions partly banished my ill-humor, but, as I neared London, all my fancied evils returned to me again. When we first arrived, which was in September, this huge city was, comparatively speaking, a desert; for all the fashionables were out ruralizing. Mamma was not, I believe, sorry for this, for she wished us to have full six or seven months' hard study before she entered at all into society. Ellen and I, of course, will have more, but Caroline is to make her regular *entrée* in March or April, and therefore must be drilled accordingly. First-rate masters were instantly engaged; indeed papa had written to many before we arrived, that no time should be lost, and as almost all their pupils were from London, we had the choice of hours, which was very agreeable, although at that time I did not feel inclined to think any thing agreeable, being accustomed to no instruction save that bestowed by Miss Harcourt and mamma; professors of music, drawing, French, Italian, German (which Caroline is seized with a violent fancy to acquire, and which I design to learn, because I should like to read Klopstock in the original,) and even what I term a lady professor of embroidery, which Caroline has succeeded in tormenting mamma to let her have—*entre nous*, it is only because she has taught Annie Grahame; all these, my dear Mary, presented a most formidable array, and for the first month I did not choose to profit by their instructions in the least. I gave full vent to all the dislike I felt to them. I encouraged indolence to a degree that frequently occasioned a reproof from Miss Harcourt. I could not bear their mode of teaching; the attention so many things required was in my present state a most painful exertion, and I almost made an inward determination to show mamma that all her endeavors were lost on me. I would not learn when every thing was so changed. Do not throw away my letter in despair of your friend, dearest Mary; only read to the end, and perhaps my character may be in some measure redeemed. There was a weight on my spirits I could not, because I would not, remove I became ill-tempered and petulant without cause; before papa

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and mamma I tried to restrain it, but did not always succeed. Percy and Herbert both spoke to me on this unwarrantable change; and I think almost for the first time in my life I saw Percy seriously angry with me, for I had even shown my irritation at his interference. I told him I had a right to act and feel as I pleased. Herbert looked sorry, and desisted in his reasonings when he found I would not listen. Percy's evident irritation and the reproaches of my own conscience added not a little to my uncomfortable feelings, as you may suppose. I looked back to what I had been at Oakwood, and the contrast of my past and present self really gave me much cause for misery. It was just before my brothers returned to college I wrote to you a long, very long letter, in which I gave more than enough vent to my silly, I should say, sinful feelings. Several hours I had employed in its composition, and to obtain these, neglected my exercises, etc., for my masters, and caused more than one for several days to make a formal complaint of my indolence and carelessness to Miss Harcourt. Her remonstrances, I am ashamed to confess, only had the effect of increasing my ill-temper. Well; I concluded at length my epistle to you, which, had you received it, would have been a trial of patience indeed; for it consisted of ten or twelve closely-written pages, in which I had so magnified my feelings of discontent and unhappiness, that any one must have fancied I had not one single blessing left. I was folding and preparing to seal it, when mamma entered my room. I must tell you that as yet I had not one reproof from her lips, though I am quite sure I deserved it long before; I used to see her look very grieved at any burst of petulance from me, but she had never spoken on the subject. I almost trembled when she appeared, for I knew that morning Miss Harcourt had said she must inform her of Mons. Deville and Signor Rozzi's continued complaints. Without entering on that subject, however, she sat down by me, and with one of her own sweet smiles, which reproached me a great deal more than words, she asked me if I really were going to seal and send that long letter of confidence to you without having shown or told any part of it to her. She might well ask, dear Mary, for I had never written a line before which I had kept from her; but my conscience told me she would not, could not approve of this, and therefore I certainly did wish I could have sent it without telling her any thing about it. What deceit, too! I hear you exclaim. Yes, dear Mary; and before this tale of shame is over, you

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will see still more clearly how one fault makes many. I did not answer her question, but remained sulkily silent.

"Will my Emmeline think me a harsh intruder on her private thoughts, if I say I cannot let this letter go till I have seen at least some parts of its contents?" she said very mildly, but so firmly I had no power to resist her; and when she asked if I would not, as I always did, read her some portions, I answered pettishly, if she read any she might as well read all. She looked deeply grieved, and my heart painfully smote me the moment the words were said; but I was too proud at that moment to show any marks of contrition, and all the time she was reading I continued working myself up to increased ill-humor.

"Are you indeed so very unhappy, my dear Emmeline?" were the only words mamma said, as she laid down the last sheet and looked in my face, with a tear trembling in her eye. I turned away, for I felt too irritated and cross to give way to the emotion I always feel when I see her grieved, and I was determined not to answer. "And do you prefer," she continued, "seeking the sympathy of a young girl like yourself to that of a mother, who has always endeavored not only to sympathize with, but to soothe the sorrows of her children?" Still I would not answer, and she added, mildly, "Do you not think, Emmeline, Mary would have been better pleased if you had written to her rather in a lighter strain? do you not think, if you were to try and shake off these painful fancies, you could write another and less desponding letter—one that I might give you my full and free permission to send, which, sorry as I am to say it, I cannot with this?"

Mild as were her words and manner, the import of what she said put the finishing stroke to my ill-temper. "If I may not write as I like, I will not write at all," I passionately exclaimed, and seizing the sheet nearest to me tore it asunder, and would have done the same with the rest, had not mamma gently laid her hand on my arm, uttering my name in an accent of surprise and sorrow; my irritable and sinful feelings found vent in a most violent flood of tears.

Will you not think, dearest Mary, I am writing of Caroline, and not of myself? does it not resemble the scenes of my sister's childhood? Can you believe that this is an account of your Emmeline, whose sweetness of temper and gentleness of disposition you have so often extolled? But it was I who thus forgot myself—I, who once believed nothing ever could make me pas-

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sionate or angry; and in one minute I was both—had excited myself till I became so even against my nature, and with whom? —even my mother, my kind, devoted mother, who has ever done so much for me, whom in my childhood, when I knew her worth much less than I do now, I had never caused to shed a tear. Oh, Mary, I cannot tell you what I felt the moment those passionate words escaped me. I may truly say I did not cry from anger, but from the most bitter, the most painful self-reproach. I think her usual penetration must have discovered this, for if she had thought my tears were really those of passion, she would not, could not have acted as she did.

She drew me gently to her, and kissed me without speaking. I threw my arms round her neck, and in a voice almost choked by sobs, implored her again and again to forgive me; that I did not mean to answer her so disrespectfully—that I knew I had become a very wicked girl, but that I really did feel very unhappy. For a few minutes she was silent, and I could see was struggling to suppress the tears my unusual conduct had occasioned. I will make no apology, dearest Mary, for entering on such minute details; for I know how you love my mother, and that every word she says is *almost* as precious to you as to her own children—*quite* it cannot be; and I give you this account also, that you may know me as I am, and not imagine I am so free from faults as I know you once believed me. Oh, when I have looked back on that day, I have felt so painfully humiliated, I would gladly banish the recollection; but it is better for me to remember it, lest I should fancy myself better than I am. Every word she said in that gentle and persuasive tone was engraved upon my heart, even as she spoke. She easily and fully convinced me of my sinfulness in thus permitting imaginary evils to make me so miserable: for that they were but imaginary it was easy to discover. Not a single blessing could I say I had lost. All I loved were around me, in health and happiness—every comfort of life was the same; and could it be possible, mamma said, that the mere departure from a favorite residence, and only for a few months, could render me so completely blind to the many blessings my Heavenly Father had scattered around me? As she spoke, a film appeared removed from my eyes, and the enormity of my conduct stood for the first time in its true colors before me. I saw—I knew how sinful I had been; and bitterly I regretted that I had not confessed every feeling to mamma, instead of hiding them, as I had done, in my own heart, and brooding on them till it became

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a kind of pleasure to do so, and till fancied evils produced real ones. I wept bitterly while she spoke, for to find how completely I had created misery for myself was no agreeable matter of reflection, and my remorse was heightened when mamma said, "You have disappointed us not a little, my dear Emmeline; for I will no longer conceal from you, that the little tour we took on our way to London was originally planned by your father and myself, to reconcile you to a change of residence. We saw how much you regretted leaving Oakwood; nor did we wonder at it, for such feelings were most natural to one of your disposition; and therefore, instead of travelling direct, and suddenly changing the scenes of our beautiful Devonshire for the confinement of this huge city, we hoped by visiting various places, and giving you new objects of reflection, to lessen your regret, and make the change of residence less painfully abrupt." As well as I could, I expressed my sorrow and repentance, and promised to use every endeavor to atone for the past, and become all that she and papa wished me.

"I believe you, my own Emmeline," my kind mother said, as she again kissed me, and her voice was no longer so sorrowfully grave as it had been at first. "I am sure, now you know all the pain you were inflicting on both your parents, every effort will be put in force to remove it." Did I deserve this speech, dear Mary? I do not think I did; for I often saw by mamma's countenance I had grieved her, and yet made no effort to control myself, and so I told her. She smiled her own sweet, dear smile of approbation, and thanking me for any candor, said—

"If I say that by indulging in these gloomy fancies and appearing discontented, and repining when so many blessings are around you, my Emmeline will be doing her mother a real injury, by rendering my character questionable, not only in the eyes of the world, but of my most valued friends, will she not do all in her power to become her own light-hearted self again?"

"Injuring your character, dearest mother!" I exclaimed, with much surprise; "in what manner?"

"I will tell you, my love," she replied; "there are many, not only of my acquaintances, but my friends, those whose opinions I really value, who believe I have been acting very wrongly all these years, in never having permitted you and Caroline to visit London. They think by this strict retirement I have quite unfitted you both for the station your rank demands you should fill That by constantly living alone with us, and

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never mingling in society, you have imbibed notions that, to say the least, may be old-fashioned and romantic, and which will make you both feel uncomfortable when you are introduced in London. These fears never entered my mind; I wished you to receive ideas that were somewhat different to the generality of Fashion's dictates, and I did not doubt but that the uncomfortable feeling, against which the letters of my friends often warned me, would very quickly be removed. But since we have been here—I do not wish to grieve you more, my dear Emmeline—I must confess your conduct has been productive to me of the most painful self-reproach. I thought, indeed, my friends were right, and that for years I had been acting on an injudicious plan, and that instead of my measures tending to future happiness, they were only productive of pain and misery, which, had I done as other mothers of my station, might have been avoided."

"Oh! do not, pray do not think so," I exclaimed, for she had spoken so sorrowfully, I could not bear it. "I formed my own misery, dearest mother; you had nothing to do with it."

"You think so now, my love," she answered, with her usual fondness; "but if my friends see you gloomy and sad, and evidently discontented, longing for pleasures which are not offered to you in London, only dwelling on visions of the past, and notions tending to the indulgence of romance, what will they think? will not my judgment be called in question? And more, they know how very much I prefer a country to a London life, domestic pleasures, to those of society; and they may imagine, and with some probability, that to indulge my selfish wishes, I have disregarded the real interests of my children."

"They cannot, they will not think so," I passionately said "They can never have known you, who form such conclusions." Would you not have agreed with me, dear Mary, and can you not fancy the wretchedness mamma's words inflicted?

"My love," she replied, with a smile, "they will not fancy they do not know me; they will rather imagine they must have been deceived in their opinion; that I am not what I may have appeared to them some few years ago. The character of a mother, my Emmeline, is frequently judged of by the conduct of her children; and such conclusions are generally correct, though, of course, as there are exceptions to every rule, there are to this, and many a mother may have been unjustly injured in the estimation of the world, by the thoughtless or criminal conduct of a wilful and disobedient child. I have

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been so completely a stranger to London society the last sixteen years, that my character and conduct depend more upon you and Caroline to be raised or lowered in the estimation of my friends and also of the world, than on any of the young people with whom you may mingle. On which, then, will my Emmeline decide,—to indulge in these gloomy fancies, and render herself ill both in health and temper, as well as exposing her mother to censure and suspicion; or will she, spite of the exertion and pain it may occasion, shake off this lethargy, recall all her natural animation and cheerfulness, and with her own bright smile restore gladness to the hearts of her parents?"

I could not speak in answer to this appeal, dear Mary, but I clung weeping to mamma's neck. I never till that moment knew all my responsibility, how much depended on my conduct; but at that moment I inwardly vowed that never, never should my conduct injure that dear devoted mother, who endeavored so fondly to soothe my grief, and check my bitter tears; who had done so much for me, who had devoted herself so completely to her children. Mentally I resolved that nothing should be wanting on my part to render her character as exalted in the eyes of the world as it was in mine. I could not bear to think how ungratefully I had acted, and I cried till I made my head and mamma's heart ache; but I could not long resist her fond caresses, her encouraging words, and before she left me I could even smile.

"And what am I to say," she said, with her usual playfulness, "of the sad complaints that I have received the last few days from Miss Harcourt, that she does not know what has come to you, from Mons. Deville and Signor Rozzi? Now what am I to say or to do to prove that this Mademoiselle Emmeline does like Italian, and is not ill, as our polite professors fancy? must I lecture as I did when she was an idle little girl, and liked her play better than her studies? Suppose these gentlemen are asked, which in all probability they certainly are, what sort of pupils Mrs. Hamilton's daughters are; they ought to be something out of the way, for we hear she has instructed them principally herself. What answer will be given, what conclusions drawn, if you do not exert yourself and prove that you can learn as well, when you like, as your sister, and even quicker than your cousin?"

I felt so ashamed, dearest Mary, that I concealed my face on her shoulder, and would not even look up to promise

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amendment for I felt I was not certain of myself; but when mamma spoke of my letter to you, and asked me if I still wished to send it, or if I would not write another, I made a desperate effort, and answered as well as I could—

"I will not write again to Mary, dear mamma, till I have conquered all these silly and sinful feelings, and can write as usual; and to be quite sure of myself, that I may not break my resolution, I promise you that for six months I will not give myself the pleasure of addressing her, and if even at the end of that time you do not think I have sufficiently recovered my senses, which certainly appear to have deserted me, you shall increase at your will my time of probation; I deserve some privation for my ungrateful conduct, and the not writing to Mary now is the greatest I can think of." I tried to appear very heroic as I made this speech, but with all my efforts I completely failed. Mamma looked at me a moment in surprise, but then, with more than usual fondness, she strained me to her heart, and I felt a tear fall on my cheek.

"My own sweet child, my darling Emmeline!" she exclaimed, "I did not expect this offered sacrifice, but I will accept it, my own love, and let its pain be soothed to your affectionate heart by the knowledge that in making it, you have given me the purest, most delicious sense of pleasure you coud bestow. We will not say six months," she added, more playfully, "we will see what the middle or end of January brings. You will then still have nearly four months to redeem your character. I have not the slightest doubt that even before that period my Emmeline will be herself." Oh, Mary, I felt so very happy as she thus spoke, that I thought I must find it very easy to conquer myself, but I was mistaken, painfully mistaken; I had encouraged despondency and gloom for so long a period, that it required every exertion, in the very least, to subdue it. I had chosen to waste my time, and be inattentive to all the means of improvement which were offered me, and to command my attention sufficiently to regain the good opinion of our sage professors was most disagreeably difficult; but I was no longer afraid to encounter mamma's sorrowful or reproving glance, as I had been before, and her fond encouragement and the marks of approval which both she and papa bestowed, when I could not but feel I had done little to deserve them, lightened the labor of my task, and by causing me to wish earnestly to deserve their kindness, increased my efforts; and at length, dearest Mary, these miser

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able feelings so completely departed from me, that I was surprised to perceive how very nearly I could be as happy in London as at dear Oakwood; quite as happy is impossible, because I feel more and more how very much I prefer a quiet domestic life in the country to London and society. You will perhaps smile, as mamma does, and say I am not introduced yet, and then I may change my mind; but I do not think I shall. She prefers the country, so it will not be very strange if I should; but when I see how completely, and yet how cheerfully she has given up her favorite residence and employments, for the interests and happiness of her children, I feel ashamed at the egregious selfishness which has been mine. Oh, Mary, when shall I ever be like mamma? when can I ever be worthy of half, nay, one quarter of that respectful admiration which is bestowed upon her, even by those whose principles and conduct are directly opposite?

In her conversations with me she had spoken more of the opinion of the world than she ever did at Oakwood, and one day venturing to notice it, as being contrary to that which she so carefully instilled, that to God and our conscience we should alone be answerable for our conduct, she answered with a smile—

"I have been long expecting this remark, my dear Emmeline, and I have endeavored to be prepared with an answer. To our Father in Heaven and to our own conscience we must still look for our guide in life; that not in one thing must we transgress the love and duty we owe our Maker, or disregard the warning or reproaches of our hearts; but still, mingling in the world as it is undoubtedly our duty to do—for as I have often told you, we do not live for ourselves, but for others—we must have due regard in minor things to the opinions of those with whom we associate. When a woman has once set up for an Independent, when, scorning the opinion of the world, she walks forth conscious in her own integrity and virtue, though no stain may have sullied her conduct or name, though she may be innately amiable and good, yet every gentle female will shrink from such a character, and tremble lest they should become like her. Women are dependent beings; in Infinite Wisdom it was thus ordained, and why should we endeavor to be otherwise? When once we set up a standard for ourselves, we have thrown aside our surest safeguard, and exposed ourselves to censure and suspicion. When the ordinances of society do not interfere with the higher principle of

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our lives, they should be obeyed, and in doing so we are following up the dictates of true religion, by doing our duty as members of a community, as children of one common Father, which, if we stand selfishly apart, we cannot do. I speak more of the opinion of the world," mamma then continued, "to you than either to your sister or your cousin. Caroline I would rather check in her perhaps too great regard for admiration; and Ellen is at present too young, and in much too delicate health, to go out with me as much as you will, even before you are what is termed introduced: besides which, her natural reserve and timidity banish all fears on that account for her. But for you, Emmeline, I do sometimes feel fearful that, in the indulgence of uncontrolled feeling, you will forget you are not quite such an independent being as you were at Oakwood. Many of your ideas are quite contrary to those generally entertained by several with whom you may associate; and I sometimes dread that by their unchecked expression, or the avowed determination never to think as your companions do—that you hate such confined ideas, or some such thing, which," and she smiled, "if I know my Emmeline rightly, is not at all unlikely—you may be exposing yourself to suspicion and dislike. I feel quite sure you never will wilfully offend, or that you will really deserve such censure; all I wish is, that you will be a little more guarded and controlled in your intercourse with strangers here, than you ever were in the happy halls of Oakwood."

I did not answer, my dear Mary; for I do not know why, but there was something in her words that caused my eyes to fill with tears. I think it was because it seemed such a painful task to maintain such a continued control over my words and feelings, and mamma as usual divined the cause of my sadness even before I could define it myself.

"Do not look so very sad, my sweet girl," she said so fondly, that like a simpleton I cried the more. "I do not wish to see you changed, however different you may be to others. I do not wish to chill one feeling in this affectionate little heart, nor check one burst of enthusiasm. Your character has been and is too great a source of unalloyed pleasure to your mother, my Emmeline; it would be misery indeed to see it in any way changed, though I do preach control so very much," she continued, more playfully, but with that same fond affection which, while it made me cry, appeared to soothe every painful emotion. "We shall not always be in society, Emmeline; come

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to me as of old, and tell me every thought and feeling, and all that has given you pain or pleasure. With me, dearest, there must be no control, no reserve; if there be the least appearance of either, you will inflict more pain on my heart than from your infancy you have ever done, for I shall think my own counsels have alienated from me the confidence of my child."

I never shall forget the impressive sadness with which she spoke these words, dearest Mary, and clinging to her, I declared and with truth, as long as I might speak and think and feel without control when with her, I would be all, all she wished in society—that I never could be unhappy,—and to be reserved with her, I felt sure I never, never could. She embraced me with the utmost tenderness, and banished all my remaining sadness by the earnest assurance that she believed me.

What a long letter have I written to you, my dearest friend; will you not say I have atoned for my long silence? If I have not atoned to you, I have at least gratified myself; for you know not how very often I longed, after such conversations as I have recounted, to sit down and write them all to you, as I had promised, when I could no longer tell in speech all my kind mother's instructions.

I do not make any apology for writing so much of her and myself, for I know to you it is unnecessary. I tried to write all she said, that you may benefit by it likewise, and in doing so I assure you I give you the sincerest proof of my affection; for to no one but my own Mary have I thus related the precious conversations I had alone with mamma. I know no one but you whom I deem worthy of them. How I wish in return you could solve a riddle for me. Why do I *fear* mamma so much, when I love her so very dearly? When I do or even think any thing that my conscience tells me is wrong, or at least not right, I absolutely tremble when I meet her eye, though she may know nothing for which to condemn me. I have never heard her voice in anger, but its sorrowful tones are far more terrible. I think sometimes if I had been in Ellen's place eighteen months ago, I should have been as ill from fear alone, as she was from a variety of emotions, poor girl. Yet why should I feel thus? Caroline does not even understand me when I speak of such an emotion. She says she is always very sorry when she has displeased mamma; but fear is to her unknown—we two certainly are complete oppo

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sites. I think Ellen's character resembles mine much more than my sister's does. But you will like to know how my time of probation is thus shortened. For I should have kept my resolution and waited the six months, pain as it was, but one day about a week ago, mamma chanced to enter our study at the very instant that the poor man who so politely believed Mademoiselle Emmeline was too ill to appreciate his lessons was praising me up to the skies for my progress; that same day Signor Rozzi had informed mamma, with all the enthusiasm of his nation, that he was delighted to teach a young lady who took such pleasure in the study of poetry, and so capable of appreciating the beauties of the Italian poets. "In truth, madam," he said, "she should be a poet herself, and the Temple of the Muses graced with her presence." There's for you, Mary! But jokes apart, I do love Italian; it is, it must be the natural language of poetry; the sentiments are so exquisitely lovely, the language, the words, as if framed to receive them—music dwells in every line. Petrarch, Tasso, Dante, all are open to me now, and I luxuriate even in the anticipation of the last,—but now I am digressing. That night mamma followed me to my room as I retired to bed, and smiling, almost laughing, at the half terror my countenance expressed, for I fancied she had come to reprove the wild spirits I had indulged in throughout the day, she said, "Is not this little head half turned with the flattery it has received to-day?"

"No," I instantly replied. "It is only the approbation of one or two that can put me in any danger of such a misfortune."

"Indeed," she answered, again smiling; "I fancied it was the fine speeches you had been hearing to-day that had excited such high spirits, but I am glad it is not; otherwise, I might have hesitated to express what I came here to do—my approbation of my Emmeline's conduct the last few months."

I felt my color rising to my very temples, dear Mary, for I did not expect this, but I endeavored to conceal all I felt by seizing her hand, and imploring her, in a serio-comic, semi-tragic tone, not to praise me, for she and papa were the two whose praises would have the effect on me she feared.

"But you must endeavor to keep your head steady now," she continued, "because papa sends a packet to Oakwood next week, and a long letter for Mary from my Emmeline must accompany it; her patience, I think, must be very nearly exhausted, and I know if you once begin to write, a frank will

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not contain all you will have to say, will it?" she added, with an arch but such a dear smile.

All my high spirits seemed for the moment to desert me, and I could not answer her, except to cover her hand with kisses. I have told you what she said in the way of reproof and advice, my dear Mary, but I cannot coolly write all she said as encouragement and praise; it was much more than I deserved, and all, therefore, that I can do, is to continue my endeavors to feel one day rather more to merit it. I have risen every morning an hour earlier, that I might tell you all I wished without encroaching on my allotted hours of study; for I hope you will not imagine I have written all this in one or two, or even three sittings; and now do I not deserve a letter almost as long from you? If you do not thus reward me, dread my vengeance, and write soon, for I long to have a letter from you; of you I have heard often—but of and from, though they may be both brothers of the family of the prepositions, are very different in meaning. I have not written one word of Caroline or Ellen. Am I not incurably egotistical? The former declares she is sure you will have no time to read a letter from her, with such a volume as mine, and Ellen says she has no time by this opportunity. I told her she ought to get up as I did, she blushed, looked confused enough to awaken my attention, and then said she supposed she was too lazy; and now I really must say farewell. Mind you write all concerning yourself and your dear mother, to whom present my very loving respects, and as for yourself, dear Mary, let this long letter prove the sincere affection and perfect confidence of your giddy friend, EMMELINE.

P.S.—No young lady can write without a postscript. Mamma has absolutely had the patience to read through my letter, and except that she said so much of her was certainly needless, she approves of it almost as much as she disapproved of my other, which she has just compelled me to read. What a tissue of absurdity it contained,—worse, it is sinful. I have had the pleasure of burning it, and I hope and trust all my silly repinings are burnt with it. Once more, adieu. E. H.

From Mrs. Hamilton to Miss Greville.

I cannot, my dear Mary, suffer Emmeline's long letter to be forwarded to you without a few lines from me, to remove all lingering fears which you may perhaps have had, that I do not approve of your correspondence. Believe me, my

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dear girl, that to see you the chosen friend of my giddy but warm-hearted Emmeline is still, as it has ever been from your childhood, a source of real pleasure both to Mr. Hamilton and myself. Female friendships are, I know, often regarded with contempt, not only by men, but frequently by the sterner principles of our own sex; they are deemed connections of folly; that the long letters which pass between young ladies set down by the world as intimate friends, are but relations of all the petty incidents they may hear or see. Such letters are also considered tending to weaken the mind and produce false sensibility, by the terms of affection they force into their service—the magnified expression of momentary and fleeting emotions. That such may sometimes be the tenor of some young people's correspondence, I do not pretend to deny, and when that is the case, and such letters are treasured up in secret and requested to be burnt, lest any eyes save those for whom they are intended should chance to encounter them, then, indeed, I too might disapprove of similar intimacies, and it was to prevent this I would not permit Emmeline to send the first letter to which she has alluded. Every feeling was magnified and distorted, till you must have fancied—had not the real cause been told—that some very serious evil had happened, or was impending over her. I did not in the least doubt but that you would have used all your influence to combat with and conquer this sinful repining; but still I thought your very replies might have called forth renewed ebullitions of sensibility, and thus in the frame of mind which she was then indulging, your hinted reproaches, however gentle, might have been turned and twisted into a decay of friendship or some such display of sensitiveness, which would certainly have removed your affection and injured herself. When, therefore, she so frankly acknowledged her error, and offered to sacrifice the pleasure I knew it was to write to you, I accepted it, spite of the pain which I saw she felt, and which to inflict on her, you may believe gave her, and now I certainly feel rewarded for all the self-denial we both practised. Emmeline is again the same happy girl she was at Oakwood, although I can perceive there is nothing, or at best but very little here, that can compensate for the rural pleasures she has left. I do not wonder at this, for in such feelings I trace those which, from my girlhood, were my own. I hope, therefore, my dear young friend, that nothing in future will check your intercourse with Emmeline, but that your correspondence may long continue a

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source of pleasure to both of you. I love to see the perfect confidence with which Emmeline has written, it proves she regards you as you deserve to be regarded, as indeed her friend, not her companion in frivolity and sentiment; and believe me, you may thus have it in your power to improve and strengthen her perhaps rather too yielding character. The manner in which, through the mercy of our compassionate God, you have been enabled, young as you are, to bear your trials, which are indeed severe, has inspired her with a respect for your character, which the trifling difference in your ages might otherwise have prevented, and therefore your letters will be received with more than ordinary interest, and your good example, my dear girl, may do much towards teaching her to bear those evils of life from which we cannot expect her to be exempt, with the same patient resignation that characterizes you. Write to her, therefore, as often as you feel inclined, and do not, I beg, suppress the thoughts her candid letter may have produced. I will not ask you to read her confession charitably, for I know you will, and I assure you she has completely redeemed her fault. The struggle was a very severe one to subdue the depression she had encouraged so long; but she has nobly conquered, and I do not fear such feelings of discontent ever again obtaining too great an ascendency.

Tell your dear mother, with my affectionate love, that she will be pleased to hear Ellen's health is improving, and has not as yet suffered in the least from the winter or the more confined air of London, which I almost dreaded might be baneful to one so delicate as she was when we left Oakwood. I think our little tour did her much good, though the idea of the exertion at first appeared painful. She is ever cheerful, though I sometimes wish she would be more lively, and cannot help fancying, notwithstanding her melancholy as a child was remarkable, that her sufferings both bodily and mental, the last eighteen months have made her the very pensive character she is. I had hoped before that unfortunate affair she was becoming as animated and light-hearted as my Emmeline, but as that cannot be, I endeavor to be thankful for the health and quiet, and, I trust, happiness she now enjoys. We receive, every opportunity, from Edward very satisfactory and pleasing letters, which, as you will believe, tend not a little to lessen the anxiety of both his sister and myself. His new captain is a far sterner character and even more rigid in discipline than was Sir Edward Manly; but our young sailor writes that this is rather

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a source of pleasure to him, for it will be the greater merit to win his regard, which he has resolved to use every endeavor to maintain.

I must not forget, in thus writing of my family, to mention that Herbert never writes home without inquiring after his favorite Mary, and if his sisters do not answer such queries very particularly, they are sure in the next letter to obtain as severe a reproach as can flow from his pen. Will you not return such little tokens of remembrance, my dear girl! Herbert has only lately changed the term by which in his boyhood he has so often spoken of you—his sister Mary; and surely friends in such early childhood may continue so in youth. The season has not, and will not yet commence here. Caroline is anticipating it with a delight which I could wish less violent. I certainly never observed the very striking contrast between my daughters as I do now, though I always knew they were very unlike. You, dear Mary, would, I think, even more than Emmeline, shrink from the life which for a few months in every year we must now lead, if we would do our duty in the station we are ordained to fill. I think one season will prove to Caroline that it is not in gayety she will find true and perfect happiness, and if it do so, I shall join in society next year with a less trembling heart. And now, adieu, my dear young friend. If by Emmeline's long silence you have ever permitted yourself to entertain a suspicion that I did not approve of your correspondence, let this letter from me prove your error, and remember, if ever sorrow in your young yet checkered life should assail you, and you would conceal them from your revered parent, fearing to increase her griefs, write to me without hesitation, without fear, and I will answer you to the best of my ability; for sympathy, believe me, you will never appeal to me in vain, and if you require advice, I will give it you with all the affection I feel towards you. God bless you, my dear girl.

Yours, most affectionately, E. HAMILTON.

From Emmeline Hamilton to Mary Greville.

A month, actually a whole month has elapsed, dearest Mary, since I wrote to you last, and not a line from you. Granting it was nearly a week on the way, three weeks are surely long enough for you to have written an answer, when I entreated you to write so soon. What can be the cause of this silence? I will not upbraid you, because I tremble when I think what may perhaps have occasioned it. Mamma has become almost

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as anxious as myself, therefore, as soon as you can, pray write if it be but one line to say you are well and at peace, I do not will not ask more. I scarcely like to write on indifferent subjects in this letter, but yet as you have given me nothing to answer, I must do so to fill up my paper: for if what I dread be not the case, you will not thank me for an epistle containing but a dozen lines. London is becoming rather more agreeable, and the fogs have given place to fine weather. The Court arrived from Brighton yesterday, and they say the town will now rapidly fill. Caroline is all joy, because early next month Mr. Grahame's family leave Brighton. They have a fine house in Piccadilly not very far from us, and Caroline is anticipating great pleasure in the society of Annie. I wonder what my sister can find to like so much in Miss Grahame, to me this friendship has been and is quite incomprehensible. She does not possess one quality that would attract me; what a fortunate thing it is we do not all like the same sort of people. Congratulate me, my dear friend, I am overcoming in a degree my dislike to the company of strangers. Some of papa and mamma's select friends and their families have been calling on us the last month, and we have lately had rather more society in the evening; not any thing like large parties, but nice little conversaziones, and really the lords and ladies who compose them are much more agreeable than my fancy pictured them. They are so intelligent and know so much of the world, and the anecdotes they relate are so amusing, and some so full of good-natured wit, that in one evening I became more advanced in my favorite study, that of character, than I do in weeks spent in retirement. Caroline is very much admired, and I sometimes look at her with surprise; for she certainly looks much better, and makes herself more agreeable among strangers than she *always* does at home. Mamma would call that perhaps an unkind reflection, but I do not mean it for such; some people are more fascinating out than at home. I am contented to remain in the shade, and only speak when I am spoken to, like a good little girl; that is to say, I converse with those who are good-natured enough to converse with me, and many agreeable evenings have I passed in that way. There is her Grace the Duchess D———, a very delightful woman, with elegant manners, and full of true kindness. I like the way she speaks to her daughters, at least her two youngest—the rest are married—Lady Anne and Lady Lucy; they appear very nice young women, agreeable companions: as yet we have but

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little conversation in common, though they appear to get on remarkably well with Caroline. The Countess Elmore, a *nouvelle mariée*, but a delightful creature, so exquisitely lovely—such eyes, hair, teeth; and yet these rare charms appear entirely forgotten, or displayed only for the Earl her husband, who is worthy of it all. He has talked to me so often, that his wife also takes a great deal of notice of me, and when they are of our party I always pass an agreeable evening. The Earl is well acquainted with our beautiful Devonshire, dearest Mary; he admires country as I do, and he asked so much about it one night last week, that I quite forgot all my intentions about control, and actually talked and apostrophized the Dart as I would to one of my own brothers. I forgot every body else in the room, till I caught mamma's glance fixed earnestly on me, and then, my dear friend, I did not feel over comfortable, however, I was soon at ease again, for I saw it was only *warning*, not *reproving;* and the next morning, when I sought her to tell her all my delight of the preceeding evening, she shared in it all, and when I asked her, half fearfully, if her glance meant I was passing the boundary she had laid down, she said, "Not with the Earl of Elmore, my dear Emmeline; but had you been talking in the same animated strain to the Marquis of Alford, who, I believe, took you in to supper, I should say you had."

"But I did not with him," I exclaimed. "No, my love, she answered, laughing at the anxiety that was, I felt, imprinted on my face. "But why are you so terrified at the bare suggestion?"

"Because," I said, and I felt I blushed, "he is a single man; and I never can speak with the same freedom to unmarried as to married men."

"And why not?" she asked, and fixed her most penetrating glance on my face.

I became more and more confused, dear Mary, for I felt even to my own mother it would be difficult to express my feelings on that subject. I managed, however, with some difficulty, to say that I had often heard Annie say she hated assemblies where there were only married men, though there might be some fun in endeavoring to excite the jealousy of their wives; but it was nothing compared to the triumph of chaining young men to her side, and by animated conversation and smiles make each believe himself a special object of attraction, when in reality she cared nothing for either. "Rather than do that,'

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I exclaimed, starting from the stool which I had occupied at mamma's feet, and with an energy I could not restrain, "I would bury myself forever in a desert, and never look upon a face I loved; rather than play upon the feelings of my fellow-creatures, I would—I know not what I would not endure. Mother," I continued, "mother, if ever you see me for one instant forget myself, and by word or sign approach the borders of what is termed coquetry, promise me faithfully you will on the instant prevent farther intercourse, you will not hesitate one moment to tell me of it; even though in your eyes it may appear but earnest or animated conversation. Mother, promise me this," I repeated, for I felt carried so far beyond myself, that when I look back on that conversation, it is with astonishment at my own temerity. "Annie has laughed at me when I expressed my indignation; she says it is what every woman of fashion does, and that I am ridiculous If I hope to be otherwise. Mother, you will not laugh at me. Spare me, spare me from the remorse that will ensue, if such ever be my conduct."

"Fear, not, my dear and noble child," she exclaimed (her voice I knew expressed emotion), and she pressed me fondly to her heart; "I promise all, all you wish. Retain these noble feelings, these virtuous fears, and I shall never have occasion to do what you desire. Oh, that your sister thought the same!" she added; and oh, Mary, I shall never forget the tone of anxiety and almost distress with which those last words were said.

"She does, she will, she must," I said, vehemently, for I would have given worlds to calm the anxiety I know she feels for Caroline, and I do wish that on some points my sister thought as I do, not from vanity, my dear Mary, believe me, but for her own happiness. I cannot describe each member of our circle, dear Mary, in this letter, but you shall have them by degrees. The Earl and Countess Elmore are my favorites. I was very sorry mamma did not permit me to join a very small party at their house last week; the Countess came herself to beg, but mamma's mandate had gone forth long ago, and therefore I submitted I hope with a good grace, but I doubt it. She wishes me only to join in society at home this year, but next year I may go out with her as often as I please. Lord Henry D'Este is one of the most amusing creatures I ever met with, he has always some droll anecdote to relate that calls forth universal merriment; but of single men, the Earl of St. Eval, eldest son of the Marquis of Malvern, is the most

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agreeable. He is not particularly handsome, but has an eloquent smile and persuading voice, very tall and noble in his carriage. He has talked to me much of Oxford, where for about six or seven months he was acquainted with my brothers, of whom he spoke in such high terms, dear Mary, and quite regretted he could not enjoy their society longer. He has since been on the Continent, and relates so delightfully all he has remarked or seen among foreigners, that it is evident he travelled really for pleasure and information, not for fashion. He appears much attracted with Caroline. I am sure he admires her very much, and I only wish she would be as pleased with him as I am, but she always provokes by saying he has not sufficient *esprit;* nor is he quite handsome enough to please her; and yet she never refuses his attentions or shrinks from his conversation, as, if I disliked him (as when we are alone she appears to do), I know I should. Do not tremble for my peace, dear Mary, as you read these flowing descriptions. In society they are most agreeable, but as the partner of my life, I have not yet seen one to whom, were the question asked, I could with any hope of happiness give my hand. These scenes are well for a time, but they are not those in which I would wish to pass my life. My wishes are humbler, much humbler; but I do not yet understand them sufficiently even to define them to myself. It is much the same with the young ladies of rank with whom I now frequently associate; they are agreeable companions, but not one, no, not one can supply your place, dearest Mary. Not one can I love as I do you. We have no ideas in common; amiable and good as in all probability they are, still, as my intimate friends, I could not regard them; and yet—strange contradiction you will say—I wish Caroline could find one amongst them to supply the place of Annie Grahame in her heart. Why I am so prejudiced against her, you will ask. Mary, I am prejudiced and I cannot help it. Something tells me my sister will obtain no good from this intimacy, I never did like her, and of late this feeling has increased. Ellen is pleased, too, when her health permits her to join our agreeable little coteries. She appears overcoming her very great reserve, but does not become more lively. She looks always to me as if she felt a stain yet lingers on her character, and though mamma and papa treat her even more kindly than they did before, if possible, still there are times when to me she appears inwardly unhappy. Strangers would only pronounce her more pensive than usual for her years; for

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her slight figure and very delicate features, as well as retiring manner, make her appear even younger than she is, but I sometimes fancy I read more. She is always calm and gentle as she used to be, and I never can discover when any thing vexes her except by her heightened color, which is more easily visible now than when her health was better.

I am summoned away, dear Mary, to go with mamma to ride, and as this leaves to-night, I must not write more now, but I intend teasing you with letters every week till you write to me, if you are not well, in the sincere wish to arouse you and draw your thoughts from what may be unpleasing subjects: and if you are idle, to spur you to your task. Adieu, my dearest friend. Your ever affectionate EMMELINE.

From Mary Greville to Emmeline Hamilton.

Greville Manor, March 13.

How can I thank you sufficiently, my dearest Emmeline, for the affectionate letters which I have received so regularly the last month. I am still weak, so that much writing is forbidden me, and therefore to reply to them all as my affection dictates is impossible. But I know your kind heart, my Emmeline; I know it will be satisfied, when I say your letters have indeed cheered my couch of suffering; have indeed succeeded not only in changing *my* thoughts from the subject that perhaps too much engrosses them, but sometimes even my poor mother's. Your first long letter, dated January, you tell me you wrote to let me know you as you are, that all your faults may be laid bare to my inspection; and what is to be the consequence—that you are, as you said you would be, lowered in my estimation? no, dear and candid girl, you are not, and while you retain such ingenuousness of disposition, you never can be. Wrong you certainly were to encourage such despondency, when so very many blessings were around you; but when once you become sensible of an error, it is already with you corrected. Mamma has, I know, some weeks ago, written to Mrs. Hamilton, to tell her Greville Manor is to be sold. We shall never return to it again; the haunts I so dearly loved, the scenes in which I have spent so many happy hours, all will pass into the hands of strangers,—it will be no longer our own; we shall be no longer together, as for so many years we have been. In changing my residence thus, I feel as if every tie I loved was torn asunder. * * * * *

I thought I could have written calmly on this subject, my

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Emmeline, but I believed myself stronger, both in mind and body, than I am. I have been very ill, and therefore let that be my excuse. Plead for me with your mother, Emmeline; tell her she knows not how I struggle to conceal every pang from the watchful eyes of that mother who has hung over my couch, with an agony that has told me plainer than words I am indeed her only joy on earth. My spirit has been so tortured the three months of my stern father's residence at home, that I feel as if I would—oh! how gladly—flee away and be at rest: but for her sake, I pray for life, for strength; for her sake, I make no resistance to the advice of Mr. Maitland, that for a year or two we should live in Italy or Switzerland, though in leaving England I feel as if I left I know not what, but somewhat more than the mere love for my native land. Why, why is my health so weak? why does it ever suffer when my mind is unhappy? Oh, Emmeline, you know not the fierce struggle it is not to murmur; to feel that it is in mercy my Father in Heaven afflicts me thus. If I might but retain my health, my mother should never suspect my sufferings, I would, I know I would, hide them from every eye; but she reads them in my failing frame and pallid features, when I would by every means in my power prove to her that while she is spared to me, I cannot be wholly unhappy. It was not illness of body that prevented my replying to your first long letter; but papa and Alfred were both at home, and my nerves were so frequently shaken, that I knew it would be impossible to write, and therefore did not attempt it, even at the risk of offending, or at least giving pain to you. I begged mamma to write to Mrs. Hamilton, and tell her all that had occurred, on the receipt of your second, dated February; for I thought while explaining our silence it would relieve herself, which I think it did. It is six weeks since then and I am only now allowed to write, and have been already obliged to pause more than once in my task; so forgive all incoherences, my dearest Emmeline. The Manor is to be sold in June; for my sake, mamma ventured to implore my father to dispose of another estate, which has lately become his, instead of this, but he would not listen to her; and I implored her not to harrow her feelings by vain supplications again. Alfred is to go to Cambridge, and this increased expense, as it is for him, papa seems to think nothing of, but to my poor mother it is only another subject of uneasiness, not so much for our sakes as for his own. Temptations of every kind will be around him; his own little in-

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come will never be sufficient to enable him to lead that life which his inclination will bid him seek. Misfortune on every side appears to darken the future; I cannot look forward. Pray for me my dearest friend, that I may be enabled to trust so implicitly in the Most High that even now my faith should not for a moment waver. Oh! Emmeline, in spite of all harshness, his coldness, and evident dislike, my heart yearns to my father. Would he but permit me, I would love and respect him as fondly as ever child did a parent, and when, after beholding his cruelty to my mother, my heart has sometimes almost involuntarily reproached him, and risen in rebellion against him, the remorse which instantly follows adds to that heavy burden which bows us to the earth. We leave England in May, if I am sufficiently strong. I do not think we shall visit London, but travel leisurely along the coast to Dover. I wish I could see you once more, for I know not if we shall ever meet again, dear Emmeline; but perhaps it is better not, it would only heighten the pain of separation. I should like much to have written to your kind, good mother with this, but I fear my strength will not permit, yet perhaps, if she have one half-hour's leisure, she will write to me again; her letters indeed are my comforts and support. I thank your brother Herbert for his many kind and affectionate messages; tell him all you will of our plans, and tell him—tell him—his sister Mary will never forget the brother of her childhood—the kind, the sympathizing companion of her youth. To Percy, too, remember me; and say all your own affection would dictate to Caroline and Ellen. I would have written to the latter, but my weakness will I know prove my best excuse. Before I quite conclude, let me say how pleased I am to think that, although you still regret Oakwood, you can find some pleasures in your present life. The society you describe must be agreeable. I could scarcely, however, refrain from smiling at your simplicity, my dear Emmeline, in imagining that all who visited at your father's house would be as delightful and estimable as those whom your second letter so eloquently described. Why are we so constantly commanded to be charitable in our intercourse one with another? Must it not be because our Great Master knew that we all had failings, some more than others? if all were as worthy and virtuous as some appear, there would be no need to practise such a virtue; but it is in a mixed society it is more frequently called into play. More, would we preserve our own virtue and piety, we must be charitable. We must look on the

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weaknesses of our fellow-creatures with mercy and kindness, or how can we demand it for ourselves? I am no advocate for seclusion in general, though my own feelings prefer a quiet life. I think a life of retirement is apt to render us selfish, and too positive in the wisdom and purity of our own notions, too prejudiced against the faults of our fellows. Society is a mirror, where we can see human character reflected in a variety of shades, and thereby, if our minds be so inclined, we may attain a better knowledge of ourselves. If, before we condemned others, we looked into our own hearts, we are likely to become more charitable and more humble at the same moment, and our own conduct necessarily becomes more guarded. But with your mother, my Emmeline, and your open heart—unsophisticated as it may be—you will never go far wrong. Mamma is looking anxiously at me, as if she feared I am exerting myself too much. I feel my cheeks are painfully flushed, and therefore I will obey her gentle hint. Farewell, my Emmeline; may you long be spared the sorrows that have lately wrung the heart of your attached and constant friend,

MARY GREVILLE.

From Mrs. Hamilton to Miss Greville.

LONDON, March 20th.

Your letter to Emmeline, my dear young friend, I have read with feelings both of pain and pleasure, and willingly, most willingly, do I comply with your request, that I would write to you, however briefly. Your despondency is natural, and yet it is with delight I perceive through its gloom those feelings of faith and duty, which your sense of religion has made so peculiarly your own. I sympathize, believe me, from my heart, in those trials which your very delicate health renders you so little able to bear. Iwill not endeavor by words of consolation to alleviate their severity, for I know it would be in vain. In your earliest youth I endeavored to impress upon your mind that we are not commanded to check every natural feeling. We are but told to pour before God our trouble, to lean on His mercy, to trust in His providence, to restrain our lips from murmuring, and if we do so, though our tears may fall, and our heart feel breaking, yet our prayers will be heard and accepted on high It is not with you, my poor girl, the weak indulgence of sorrow that ever prostrates you on a couch of suffering, it is the struggle of resignation and concealment, that is too fierce for the delicacy of your constitution; and do you not think

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that strife is marked by Him, who, as a father, pitieth his children? Painful as it is to you, my dear Mary, your sufferings may be in a degree a source of mercy to your mother. Agonizing as it is to the heart of a parent, to watch the fevered couch of a beloved child, yet had she not that anxiety, the conduct of your father and brother might present still deeper wretchedness. For your sake, she dismisses the harrowing thoughts that would otherwise be her own; for your sake, she rallies her own energies, which else might desert her; and when you are restored to her, when, in those intervals of peace which are sometimes your own, she sees you in health, and feels your constant devotion, believe me, there is a well of comfort, of blessed comfort, in her fond heart, of which nothing can deprive her. For her sake, then, my dearest Mary, try to conquer this reluctance to leave England. I do not reproach your grief, for I know that it is natural. But endeavor to think that this residence for a few years on the Continent, may restore your mother to a degree of peace, which, in England, at present she cannot know; and will not this thought, my love, reconcile you to a short separation from the land of your birth, and the friends you so dearly love? We shall all think of and love our Mary, however widely parted. We will write very frequently, and every information I can obtain of your brother shall be faithfully recorded. Mr. Hamilton has ever felt for your mother as a brother would, and for her sake, her misguided son will be ever an object of his dearest care. Do not fear for him, and endeavor to soothe your mother's anxiety on that head also. Herbert has written to you, I inclose his letter; and he entreats most earnestly that you will not only permit him to continue to write, but answer him, during your residence abroad. He has been deeply grieved at the intelligence we have reported of you, and I hope and think, if your mother do not disapprove of your correspondence, that the humble yet fervent faith which breathes in the religion of my son, may long prove a source of consolation as well as interest to you, who, from your childhood, could sympathize with all his exalted feelings. Poor Emmeline has shed many bitter tears over your letter; she cannot bear to think of your leaving England, but yet agrees with me in believing it will be a beneficial change for both yourself and Mrs. Greville, but her letter shall speak her own feelings. I will not write more now, but will very soon again. Do not exert yourself too much to answer either Emmeline or myself; we will not wait for regular replies

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I have written to your mother also, therefore this brief epistle is entirely for yourself, as you wished it. Mr. Hamilton will meet you at Dover, which will afford me much satisfaction, as I shall know more than I could ever learn by a letter, and he will, I trust, be enabled to set your mother's heart at rest on some points which must be now subjects of anxiety. God bless you, my Mary, and restore you speedily to health and peace.

Yours, with the warmest affection,

E. HAMILTON.

CHAPTER II.

AN early April sun was shining brightly through one of the windows of an elegantly furnished boudoir of a distinguished-looking mansion, in the vicinity of Piccadilly. There was somewhat in the aspect of the room, in the variety of toys scattered on every side, in the selection of the newest novels which were arranged on the table, and an indescribable air which pervaded the whole, that might have aroused a suspicion in any keen observer who could discover character by trifles, that the lady to whom that apartment belonged possessed not the very strongest or most sensible mind. A taste which frivolous trifles could alone gratify appeared evident; and the countenance of the lady, who was reclining listlessly on the couch, would have confirmed these surmises. She did not look above forty, if as much, but her features told a tale of lassitude and weariness, at variance with the prime of life, which was then her own. No intellect, no emotion was expressed on her countenance; it never varied, except, perhaps, to denote peevishness or sullenness when domestic affairs annoyed her, which appeared to be the case at present. A volume of the last new novel was in her hand, in which she appeared sufficiently interested as to feel still more annoyed at the interruption she was constantly receiving from a young lady, who was also an inmate of her room.

Striking, indeed was the contrast exhibited in the features of the mother and daughter, for so nearly were they connected, and yet to some the inanimate expression of the former would have been far preferable to the handsome but scornful countenance of the latter. She could not have been more than eighteen, but the expression of the features and the tone of chararacter were already decided to no ordinary degree. There was an air of fashion in her every movement; an easy as

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surance and independence of spirit which might have made her mother respected, but which in one so young were intolerable to all save those whom she had contrived to make her devoted admirers. Spite of the natural beauty of her face, haughtiness, pride, and some of the baser passions of human nature, were there visibly impressed; at least whenever she appeared in her natural character, when no concealed designs caused her to veil those less amiable emotions in eloquent smiles and a manner whose fascination was felt and unresisted, even by those who perhaps had been before prejudiced against her. Various were the characters she assumed in society—assumed to suit her own purpose, made up of art; even at home she sometimes found herself seeking for design, as if it were impossible to go straight forward, to act without some reason. We shall find, however, as we proceed, that she had one confidant at home, to whom, when, exhausted by the fatigue of planning, she would confess herself, and who was generally the hearer and abettor of the young lady's schemes. This was a person who had lived for many years in the family as governess; although that office with the elder of her charges had ever been but nominal, and with the younger it was neglected for the office of friend and confidant, which Miss Malison very much preferred.

It was evident this morning that the efforts of the young lady had not succeeded quite so well as usual in veiling the discontent in which she inwardly indulged. She was amusing herself at that moment in opening every book on the table, glancing sulkily on their contents, and then throwing them down again with a violence that not only had the effect of making her mother start, but of disturbing the quiet repose of some of the fragile toys in their vicinity, to the manifest danger of their destruction.

"I wish you would oblige me, Annie, by endeavoring to amuse yourself in a quieter manner," observed her mother, in a very languid tone. "You have no pity on my poor nerves. You know when I have these nervous headaches, the least thing disturbs me."

"You may be certain, mamma, it is reading that makes them worse, not my noise. You had much better put away the book, and then you have some chance of being free from them."

"Will you read to me then instead? I assure you I should much prefer it."

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"*I* read aloud! I could not do it to please the most agreeable person in the world; and as you are so very obliging to me in refusing so decidedly to go with me to-night, you cannot expect I should oblige you."

Lady Helen Grahame's placid countenance gave no evidence of inward disturbance at this undutiful speech: she was too much used to it, to feel the pain it might otherwise have produced, and too indifferent to be either indignant or displeased.

"You are very ungrateful, Annie," she replied, in that same languid tone, but with so very little expression in her voice, no emotion was visible. "I tell you I will send round to Lady Charlton or the Countess St. Aubyn; either of them, I know, will be very happy to chaperon you. Surely you can let me be quiet for one evening."

"Lady Charlton I cannot bear; she is the most detestable creature I know. I would rather be buried alive in the country, than join in London society under her care; with her long speeches of prudery and virtue, and the modest reserve of young ladies, and a hundred other such saint-like terms, when all the time she is doing all she can to catch husbands for her three great gawky daughters, who in mamma's presence are all simplicity and simper—sweet girls just introduced; when I am very much mistaken if the youngest is not nearer thirty than twenty. And as for Lady St. Aubyn, you know very well, mamma, papa declared I should never go out with her again; it is just the same as if I were alone. She has not a word or thought for any one but herself: she thinks she may act with as much coquetry now as before she married. I do believe that woman only married that she might be more at liberty and go out by herself."

"Then, if you like neither of them, write a note to Mrs. Hamilton. Your father would be better pleased if you were to go under her care, than of any other."

"Mrs. Hamilton! I would not for worlds. Every pleasure I might otherwise enjoy would vanish before the stern majesty of her presence. I wonder how Caroline can bear the thraldom in which her mother holds her—it is complete slavery."

"I will not hear a word against Mrs. Hamilton," exclaimed Lady Helen, with more display of feeling than had yet been perceivable. "She is a truer friend both to your father and myself than any of those with whom we associate here."

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"It is well you think so, my lady mother," replied Miss Grahame, in a peculiar tone. "It is fortunate you are not troubled with jealousy, and that this paragon of perfection, this Mrs. Hamilton, is your friend as well as papa's. If I heard my husband so constantly extolling another woman in my presence, I should not be quite so easy."

If a flush rose to Lady Helen's pale cheek at these words, it was so faint as scarcely to be perceivable, and she took no notice, except to say—

"If your great desire to go to this ball is to be with Caroline the first night of her *entrée*, I should think Mrs. Hamilton was the best chaperon you could have."

"I tell you, mother, I will not go with her. She has not bewitched me as she has you and papa. If you would only be quiet for a few hours, I am sure your head would be sufficiently well for you to go with me; and you know I never do enjoy an evening so much as when you accompany me, dear mamma," she continued, softening the violence with which she had at first spoken into one of the most persuasive eloquence; and humbling her pride and controlling the contempt with which she ever looked on her weak but far more principled mother, she knelt on a low stool by her side, and caressingly kissed Lady Helen's hand.

"Dear mamma, you would oblige me, I am sure you would, if you knew how much your presence contributes to my enjoyment. A ball is quite a different thing when I feel I am under your wing, and you know papa prefers my going out with you to any one else."

Annie spoke truth, though her words appeared but flattery The extreme indolence of Lady Helen's natural disposition, which was now heightened by the lassitude attendant on really failing health, rendered her merely a chaperon in name. Annie felt very much more at liberty when with her than with any other; she could act as she pleased, select her own companions, coquette, talk, dance, without ever thinking of her mother or being sought for by her, till the end of the evening. It was enough she was with Lady Helen, to silence all gossiping tongues and to satisfy her father, who, one of the most devoted members of the Lower House, scarcely ever visited such places of amusement, and therefore knew not the conduct of either his wife or daughter. He long since discovered his authority was as nothing to his children; he felt most painfully his sternness had alienated their affections. and he now rather shrunk from

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their society; therefore, even at home he was a solitary man, and yet Grahame was formed for all the best emotions, the warmest affections of our nature. He was ignorant that his wife now very frequently suffered from ill-health, for he had never seen her conduct different even when in youth and perfectly well. Had he known this, and also the fact that, though trembling at his sternness, she yet longed to receive some token of his affection—that she really loved him, spite of the many faults and the extreme weakness of her character, he might have been happy.

Deceived by her daughter's manner, Lady Helen began to waver in the positive refusal she had given to accompanying her, and Annie was not slow in discovering her advantage; she continued the persuasions she knew so well how to use, concealing the inward struggle it was to veil her discontent at this unwonted humiliation, and suppressing the violence that was ready to break forth, at length succeeded. Though really feeling too languid for the exertion, the wavering mother could not resist the unusually gentle manner of the persevering daughter, and Miss Grahame flew to her confidante to impart the joyful tidings.

Miss Malison was employed in endeavoring, by commands, exhortations, and threats, to compel her pupil to practise a difficult sonata, which her music-master had desired might be prepared by the time of his next visit. Now it happened that Lilla Grahame had not the slightest taste for music, and that Miss Malison did not possess the patient perseverance requisite to smooth the difficulty of the task, nor the gentleness necessary to render it more pleasing to her pupil; therefore, in these practising lessons discord ever prevailed over harmony, and the teacher was ever ready to seize the most trifling excuse to neglect her office, and leave Lilla to practise or not as she pleased.

"Malison, *chère* Malison," exclaimed Annie, in a tone of glee, as she entered, "do leave that stupid girl and come with me; I have some charming intelligence to communicate. And it really is no use boring yourself with Lilla; she will never play, try as hard as she can."

"According to you, I shall do nothing," burst angrily from her sister's lips, for her temper, naturally good, though somewhat hasty, had been completely ruined by careless and mistaken treatment. "If I had been properly taught, I should have done as others do: if Miss Malison had chosen to take

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the same pains with me as Miss Harcourt does with Emmeline and Ellen, I should have been a very different girl."

"Insolent, ungrateful girl! do you dare say I have neglected my duty?" exclaimed the *gouvernante*, enraged beyond bounds at this display of insubordination in one whose spirit she had left no means untried to bend to her will, and forgetting herself in the passion of the moment, enforced her words by what is termed a sound box on the ear.

"Now go and tell mamma, pretty dear; or papa, if you like it better," Miss Grahame said, in a whining tone.

But Lilla answered her not. A crimson flush for the moment spread over her very temples at the infliction of this indignity, which very quickly gave way to a deadly, almost livid paleness, on which the marks of Miss Malison's ready fingers were the only spots of red. Without a word in reply, she hastily rose from the piano and left the room.

"Will she *blab?*" was the elegant question that was asked as the door closed.

"Not she," replied Annie, laughing. "She dare not tell papa, and she knows it is of no use appealing to mamma, who implicitly believes all you tell her of Miss Lilla's excessive obstinacy, idleness, and passionate temper in which she so constantly indulges; your deep regrets that either of Lady Helen Grahame's daughters should be such a character have succeeded so admirably. I have had such a struggle to obtain mamma's promise to go with me to-night, that I really feel exhausted," and the young lady threw herself in a most graceful attitude of listlessness on a sofa that stood invitingly beside her.

"But have you succeeded?"

"Admirably! at length mamma thinks I am most amiable. My persuasions were so eloquent, that the most obdurate person could not have resisted them. I tried violence and sulkiness at first, thinking to frighten or worry her into compliance; but finding both fail, I was compelled to have recourse to humiliation and persuasion. If it had continued much longer, I should have choked by the way; it is quite a relief to breathe freely again. What do you think of her wishing me to go under the care of Mrs. Hamilton to-night? I really could hardly control my horror at the idea."

"Horrible, indeed! What would have become of all your plans, if you had?"

"My dear creature, I would not have gone with her for worlds; but, however, I think my plans are in too good train

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ing for one night spent under her eyes to injure them. Caroline is beginning, I think, to feel somewhat like a slave under this keen *surveillance* of her paragon mother, and to pine for the freedom of thought and act which I so unboundedly enjoy. She only wants a little of my good advice and better example, to become really a girl of spirit."

"But take care the spirit you are calling forth does not turn against you," observed Miss Malison.

"Not at all likely, *ma chère*. I am careful only to excite it to serve my own purposes. She likes me, I believe, and I can make her what I please. Let her confidence in her mother be once destroyed, you will see if she does not act as foolishly as I can desire. She has been buried in the country so long, she is a mere infant with regard to all that concerns a life of fashion; and, therefore, will be gladly led by one she considers so completely *au fait* at its mysteries as myself. I used to like her in the country, because she always listened so eagerly to all I said about London. I saw she envied me even when we were children, and therefore fancied myself a most important personage."

"And do you like her now?"

"You are laughing at me, *chère* Malison. You know I cannot bear a rival, and this girl's dazzling beauty will completely cast me in the shade."

"You don't mean to say her beauty can be compared to yours?" interrupted Miss Malison.

"Perhaps not in the sterling worth of the two," replied Annie, glancing complacently on a large mirror; "but she is new, Malison—quite new. Her mother only kept her so long away that she might shine with the greater brilliancy when introduced. As for Caroline, I like her, as far as she assists my plans, and by her silly, or, if that would serve me better, criminal conduct, takes somewhat away from her mother's perfection, and by the pain Mrs. Hamilton will feel, gratify my overpowering detestation. Malison, you look delighted. Your assistance I am sure of, if I require it; for you dislike this paragon of her sex almost as much as I do."

"Indeed I do. I have never forgotten nor forgiven her presumption a year or two ago, in hinting so broadly I was mistaken in my treatment of Lilla, and that gentleness would have much better effect; gentleness indeed, with a girl that would tire the patience of a saint. She is always worse after having been with this Mrs. Hamilton, and I suppose it will

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be all over again now. I wish, with your charming plans, my dear Miss Grahame, you would find one to prevent all intercourse between the Hamiltons and your sister."

"At present, *ma chère*, such a thing is out of my power but we will not despair; although the more you would say about Miss Lilla being undeserving of such indulgence, the more papa would answer, let her go and she will learn to be better there. I heard him give mamma peremptory orders the other day, when we prevented her going, never to refuse whenever Mrs. Hamilton invited her. Severity is a most admirable method, my good Malison; you will break her spirit if you persevere, notwithstanding all the amiable Mrs. Hamilton may do or say."

"I wish I may; but you have not told me all yet. How proceed your schemes with Lord Alphingham?"

"To perfection! I have given Caroline a distaste for every other kind of person. She has met him, you know, once or twice here, and that was sufficient to fascinate her. She thinks him the handsomest and most delightful man she ever knew. It is enough for Mr. Hamilton to see him a friend of papa's to be attracted towards him; in all probability he will be introduced at his house, and then my scheme will be still easier. It will not be difficult to talk Caroline into fancying herself desperately in love with him, and he with her—he is already attracted; and when I see the aspect of affairs favorable, I will just get some kind friend to whisper into Mrs. Hamilton's ear some of the pretty tales I have heard of this Viscount, and you will see what will follow. These *on dits* are, fortunately for my plans, only known among my coterie. With us, they only render Lord Alphingham more interesting; but with Mrs. Hamilton they would have the effect of banishing him for ever from her presence and from the notice of her daughter: the catastrophe, my dear creature, shall be the perfection of diplomacy, but of that hereafter. I owe Lord Alphingham a spite, which I will pay off one day, for his desertion of me the moment Caroline appeared. I may do all I wish with one word. All my present intention is, by a gradual yet sure process, to undermine Caroline's confidence in her mother, and make me her confidante instead, and if I do that, the rest is easy."

"You know you have never failed in any scheme, therefore you may feel secure in this," replied Miss Malison, with ready flattery; for she knew Miss Grahame's love of designing

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and really felt gratified at any plan tending to injure Mrs. Hamilton, whom she detested with all the malevolence of a mean and grovelling mind, which despised the virtue that was too exalted for its comprehension.

Some little time longer this amiable pair conversed, but their further conversation it is needless to record. We have already seen that Emmeline Hamilton's prejudices againt Annie Grahame was not unfounded, and that at present is enough. Before, however, we quit Lady Helen's mansion, we may say a few words on the character of Lilla, in whom, it may be recollected, Mrs. Hamilton had ever felt interest sufficient to indulge a hope that she might render her one day a greater comfort to her father than either of his other children. As a child, her temper was naturally good, though somewhat hasty and self-willed; high-spirited, but affectionate to a degree that would have made the task of training and instruction easy to any one who possessed sufficient gentleness to win her affection, and with patience, yet firmness, to guide her in the right way. Unfortunately, Miss Malison possessed neither; extremely passionate herself, where her interests did not interfere to control it, she was not at all the person to guide a passionate child. Severity was her weapon, and every means used to break the spirit, which she could plainly perceive would soon endeavor to throw her off her control. Lilla revolted at this treatment, and many evil qualities were thus introduced in her disposition, which, when they fell under her eye, Mrs. Hamilton was convinced was completely the fruits of mistaken management. From being merely hasty, her passionate anger and hatred of her governess had now increased to such height, as to be really alarming not only to her weak-minded mother, but to Mrs. Hamilton, who, however, was certainly never aware of their extent; for before her Lilla was generally gentle and controlled. Something always occurred to call forth these bursts of passion in Lady Helen's presence, and consequently, the actual conduct of Lilla confirmed the statement of Miss Malison, as to her violence and other evil qualities. Mr. Grahame, too, was compelled to believe all that was told him, and his sternness towards his unhappy child frequently caused her to fly from his presence in dread; although her warm heart yearned towards him with such deep affection, which could he have guessed one-half of its extent, would have twined her fondly round his heart, and forced him to examine more strictly than he did the conduct of Miss Malison. Lilla's dis

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like to her more favored sister was almost as violent as that she bore to her governess; and the conviction that all her mother's family looked on her as a passionate, evil-minded girl, of course, increased every bitter feeling. Often, very often, did Mrs. Hamilton long to implore Mr. Grahame to dismiss Miss Malison, and place Lilla under the care of some lady more fitted for the task; but she felt that such advice might be looked upon with some justice by Lady Helen's friends as most unwarrantable interference. Miss Malison had been most highly recommended to Lady Helen by her mother, the Duchess of ——, and as, in the opinion of that branch of the family, Annie abundantly displayed the good effects of her management, it was very naturally supposed that Lilla's opposite character proceeded from an innate evil disposition, and not from any fault in her governess. She was now nearly fourteen, and each year Mrs. Hamilton's hopes for the future worth of her character became fainter; yet still she determined to do all in her power to counteract Miss Malison's plans, and subdue Lilla's fearful passions, and those longings for revenge, not only on her governess but her sister, which, by many little things, she could perceive were lurking round her heart. Montrose Grahame had been, as we already know, from his earliest youth the intimate friend of Mr. Hamilton, and notwithstanding the increasing cares of their respective families, this friendship had continued, and, if possible, increased, and Mrs. Hamilton sharing the sentiments of her husband, the qualities of Grahame speedily caused him to become her friend likewise She had ever seen with regret his sternness to his children, she saw also that he was pained, deeply pained, as their characters became more matured; and, spite of the difficulties of the task, her benevolent mind determined to leave no means untried to make one child at least his comfort. Lilla's affection for her was as violent as her other feelings, and on that she resolved at first to work. It was strange, too, how devotedly attached this wild and headstrong girl became to one, who of all others appeared least suited to her, and that one the mild and pensive Ellen. It appeared as if it were a relief to meet one so widely different to herself, and therefore she loved her. The high spirits and animation of Emmeline appeared less congenial to her affections than the gentle sweetness of Ellen. Caroline was Annie's friend, and that was enough for her; not even her being Mrs. Hamilton's daughter could make her an object of interest. On the day we have

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mentioned, Lilla had sat for above an hour in her room; indignation at the insult she had received swelling in every vein, and longing with sickening intensity for some means to free herself from such galling thraldom. She did not give vent to her injured feelings in tears, but her countenance so clearly expressed the emotions of her heart, that it actually startled a servant who entered with a message—a request from Mrs. Hamilton, that her young friend would spend that evening with her daughter and niece. Lilla started up with a wild exclamation of delight, and the anticipation of the evening hours enabled her to obey with haughty calmness the summons of Miss Malison. Before, however, she departed on her visit, a fresh ebullition had taken place between the sisters in the presence of their mother, to the great terror of Lady Helen, whose irritation at Lilla's violence increased, as she could perceive nothing in Annie's words or manner to cal for it. Had she been less indolent, she might easily have discovered that her elder daughter never permitted a single opportunity to escape without eliciting Lilla's irritability. As it was, she coldly rejected the offered caresses the really affectionate girl would have lavished on her, as she wished her good night, and therefore it was with a heart bursting with many mingled emotions she sought the happy home of her beloved friends.

There gladly will we follow her, for the scenes of violence and evil passion we have slightly touched on, are not subjects on which we love to linger.

CHAPTER III.

THERE was thought, deep thought, engraved on Mrs. Hamilton's expressive countenance, as she sat beside a small table her head leaning on her hand, anxious, perhaps even painful visions occupying her reflective mind. The evening was gradually darkening into twilight, but still she did not move, nor was it till a well-known tap sounded at the door, and her husband stood before her, that she looked up.

"Will you not let your husband share these anxious thoughts, my Emmeline?" he said, as he gazed earnestly on her face.

"My husband may perhaps think them silly and unfounded fancies," she replied, with a faint smile.

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"He is so prone to do so," answered Mr. Hamilton, in an accent of playful reproach; "but if you will not tell me, I must guess them—you are thinking of our Caroline!"

"Arthur, I am," she said, with almost startling earnestness; "oh, you cannot tell how anxiously! I knew not whether I am right to expose her to the temptations of the world; I know her disposition, I see the evils that may accrue from it, and yet, even as if I thought not of their existence, I expose her to them. Oh, my husband, can this be right? can I be doing a parent's duty?"

"We should not, my beloved, be fulfilling the duties of our station, did we not sometimes mingle in society: all our duty is not comprised in domestic life. It is when we retain our integrity unsullied, our restraining principles unchanged in the midst of temptations, that we show forth, even to the thoughtless, the spirit that actuates us, and by example may do good. Besides, remember, dearest, we are not about to enter into continued and incessant dissipation, which occupies the existence of so many; we have drawn a line, and Caroline loves her parents too well to expect or wish to pass its boundary. Remember, too, the anxious fears which were yours, when Percy was about to enter scenes of even stronger temptation than those which will surround his sister; and have they had foundation? Has not the influence of his mother followed him there, and restrained him even at the moment of trial, and will not the influence of that mother do the same for Caroline?"

"Percy is, indeed, all my heart could wish," replied Mrs. Hamilton, still somewhat sadly; "but his disposition is different to that of Caroline's. I know his confidence in me is such, and his affection so strong, that for my sake he would do more than those who but slightly know him would imagine. When a son really loves his mother, it is a different, perhaps a more fervid, feeling than that ever known by a daughter. He feels bound to protect, to cherish, and that very knowledge of power heightens his affections."

"You do not doubt your daughters' love, my Emmeline? must I accuse you of injustice, too?"

"No, dearest Arthur, I do not doubt their love; for my Emmeline I do not tremble. Her confidence I shall never lose; her affections, however I may be called upon to exert my authority, will never waver, and completely opposite as are the feelings with which she and Percy regard me, their love may be equally intense. But forgive me, my dear husband, I

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may be unjust, and if I am may my child forgive me; I am not—oh, that I were—equally confident in my Caroline. She loves me, but that affection, I know, does not prevent her thinking me harsh and unkind, if my wishes interfere with hers. My authority is not the same with her as it is to her sister and cousin. She seeks another confidential friend besides her mother, for she dreads my opinions differing from hers. I have marked her thus in early childhood, and it still exists, though her temper is more controlled, her disposition more improved. The last few years she has been thrown almost entirely with me, and not much above a twelvemonth since she shrunk from the idea of confiding in any one as she did in me."

"And while that confidence exits, my Emmeline, you surely have no right to fear."

"But it is waning, Arthur. The last month I know, I feel it is decreasing. She is no longer the same open-hearted girl with me as she was so lately at Oakwood. She is withdrawing her confidence from her mother, to bestow it on one whom I feel assured is unworthy of it."

"Nay, Emmeline, your anxiety must be blinding you; you are too anxious."

His wife answered him not in words, but she raised her expressive eyes to his face, and he saw they were filled with tears.

"Nay, nay, my beloved!" he exclaimed, as he folded her to his bosom, struck with sudden self-reproach. "Have my unkind words called forth these tears? forgive me, my best love; I think I love my children, but I know not half the depths of a mother's tenderness, my Emmeline, nor that clear-sightedness which calls for disquietude so much sooner in her gentle heart than in a father's. But can we in no way prevent the growth of that intimacy of which I know you disapprove?"

"No, my dearest Arthur, it must now take its course. Pain as it is to me, I will not rudely check my child's affections, *that* will not bring them back to me. She may, one day, discover her error, and will then gladly return to that love, that tenderness, of which she now thinks but lightly. I must endeavor to wait till that day comes, with all the patience I can teach my heart to feel," she added, with a smile. "Perhaps I am demanding more than is my due. It is not often we find young girls willing to be contented with their mother only as

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a friend; they pine for novelty, for companions of their own age, whom they imagine can sympathize better in their feelings. A child is all in all to a mother, though a parent is but one link in the life of a child; yet my children have so long looked on me as a friend, that, perhaps, I feel this loss of confidence the more painfully."

"But you will regain it, my Emmeline; our Caroline is only dazzled now, she will soon discover the hollowness of Annie's professions of everlasting friendship."

Mrs. Hamilton shook her head.

"I doubt it, my dear husband. The flattering warmth with which Annie first met Caroline has disappointed me. I thought and hoped that here, surrounded by all her fashionable acquaintances, she would rather have neglected her former friends, and Caroline's pride taking umbrage, their intimacy would have been at once dissolved. Instead of this, Annie never fails to treat her with the most marked distinction, evidently appearing to prefer her much above her other friends; and, therefore, as in this instance Caroline has found my warnings and suspicions needless and unjust, she is not likely to permit my opinion of Annie to gain much ascendency."

"But deceived as we have been in this instance, my dear Emmeline, may we not be so in other points of Annie's character? She is evidently devoted to fashion and fashionable pleasures, but still there may be some good qualities lurking round her heart, which her intimacy with Caroline may bring forward."

"I hope it may be so," replied Mrs. Hamilton, fervently, though somewhat doubtingly. "For her father's sake, as well as that of my child's, I wish her disposition may be different to that which I, perhaps uncharitably, believe it. You must give me a portion of your sanguine and trusting hopes, my dearest Arthur," she continued, fondly laying her hand in his.

Mr. Hamilton returned a playful answer, and endeavored to turn the thoughts of his wife to other and more pleasurable subjects. Anxiety such as hers could not be entirely dispelled, but it was lessened, for she had imparted it to her husband, and his watchful care would combine with her own to guard their child.

Very different were Caroline's feelings on this important night. Mrs. Hamilton's fears and Annie's hopes were both well founded. We have known the character of Caroline from a child; and though the last three or four years it had so im-

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proved, that at Oakwood Mrs. Hamilton had ventured to banish fear, and indulge in every pleasing hope, yet there was a degree of pride still remaining, that revolted very frequently from the counsels even of her mother; that high and independent spirit sometimes in secret longed to throw off the very slight restraint in which she felt held at home. She could not bear to feel that she was in any way controlled; she longed for the exercise of power, and by the display of that beauty, those qualities, she knew she possessed, force herself to be acknowledged as a girl of far more consequence than she appeared to be when in the quiet halls of Oakwood. There nothing ever occurred to call these feelings forth, but they were only dormant, and in London they obtained much greater sway. She felt more controlled than ever by her mother. Secretly she pined to free herself from that which she magnified into thraldom, but which was but the watchful tenderness of a devoted parent; and when the representations, sympathy, and persuasions of Annie were listened to, no wonder these feelings increased. Cautiously Miss Grahame had worked: she continually spoke of the freedom she enjoyed; she introduced her friend to some young ladies who were continually speaking of the delights of independence both in act and word. Once introduced, they said they were emancipated from the labor of the schoolroom, they could employ themselves as they liked, go out when they pleased, and their mothers never interfered with their amusements, except to see that they were becomingly dressed, chaperon them to balls, and second all their efforts at fascination.

The restraint which, when compared with these Caroline could not but feel was hers at home, of course became more and more intolerable. In confidence, she imparted to Annie her discontent. For the first time she confided in another feelings she shrunk from imparting to her mother, and once such a confidential intimacy commenced, she neither could nor would draw back. Annie artfully appeared to soothe, while in reality she heightened the discontent and even indignation of her friend. Yes; Caroline by slow degrees became even indignant at the conduct of that mother whose every thought, whose most fervent prayer was for the happiness of her children; and she looked to this night as the beginning of a new era, when she allowed herself to hope, with the assistance of Annie, she would gradually escape from control, and act as other girls of spirit did.

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There was another subject on which, by the advice of Annie, Caroline carefully refrained from speaking at home, and that was Lord Alphingham, a handsome and elegant viscount, who it may be remembered had been mentioned in Annie's conversation with Miss Malison; and yet it would appear strange that such was Miss Grahame's counsel, when Mr. Hamilton frequently spoke of the viscount with every mark of approbation due to his public conduct; of his private, little was known, and still less inquired. He was famous in the Upper House—an animated and eloquent speaker—seconding and aiding with powerful influence all Grahame's endeavors in the Lower House, and rendering himself to the latter a most able and influential friend. His brilliant qualities, both as a member of parliament and of polite society, rendered him universally courted; yet notwithstanding this, Mr. Hamilton had never invited him to his house.

"His public character, as far at least as it meets our eye, is unquestionably worthy of admiration," he had said one day to his wife, "but I know nothing more; of his private character and conduct I am and must remain ignorant, and therefore I will not expose my children to the fascination of his society in the intimacy of home."

Mrs. Hamilton had agreed with him, but it required not the "intimacy of home" to give Annie an opportunity of persuading Caroline towards secretly accepting his attentions, and making an impression in his favor on her heart; and the latter looked to her *entrée* with the more pleasure, as she hoped, and with some justice, it would give her many more opportunities of meeting him than she now enjoyed. She saw before her, in imagination, a long train of captives whom she would enslave, still Lord Alphingham in all stood pre-eminent; and visions of varied nature, but all equally brilliant, floated before her eyes, as she prepared for the grand ball which, for the first time in her life, she was about to join.

The business of the toilette was completed, and we might forgive the proud smile of exultation which curled round her lip, as she gazed on the large pier glass which reflected her whole figure. The graceful folds of the rich white silk that formed her robe, suited well with the tall and commanding form they encircled. The radiant clasp of diamonds securing the braid of pearls which twined the dark glossy hair, glittered with unusual brilliancy on that noble yet haughty brow, and heightened the dazzling beauty of her countenance. The dark

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eyes sparkling with animation, her cheek possessing the rose of buoyant youth and health, the Grecian nose, the lip, which even pride could not rob of its beauty, all combined to form a face lovely indeed. Fanny had gazed and admired her young lady with suppressed exclamations of delight, which were strangely at variance with the sigh that at that instant sounded on Caroline's ear; she turned hastily and beheld her mother, who was gazing on her with looks of such excessive tenderness, that a strange pang of self-reproach darted through her heart, although it was instantly banished by the fancy, that if it was with a sigh her mother regarded her on such a night, how could she look for sympathy in the pleasure then occupying her mind. At Oakwood every feeling, every anticipation would have been instantly imparted, but now she only longed to meet Annie, that to her all might be told without restraint. Painful, indeed, was this unwonted silence of a child to the fond heart of Mrs. Hamilton, but she refused to notice it. Much, very much, did she wish to say, but she saw by the countenance of her daughter it might be considered mistimed; yet to launch the beautiful girl she saw before her into the labyrinth of the world, without uttering one word of the thoughts which were thronging on her mind, she felt was impossible. They might not have the effect she wished, yet she would do her duty. Desiring Fanny to take her young lady's shawl down stairs, she gently detained Caroline as she was about to follow her.

"Listen to me but for a few minutes, my love," she said, in that affectionate yet impressive tone, which seldom failed to arrest the attention of her children, "and forgive me, if my words fall harshly and coldly on your excited fancy. I know well the feelings that are yours, though you perhaps think I do not, by the involuntary sigh you heard, and I can sympathize with them, though lately you have refused to seek my sympathy. Bright as are your anticipations, reality for a time will be still brighter. Brilliant will be the scenes of enchantment in which you will mingle,—brilliant, indeed, for you are beautiful, my Caroline—and admiration on all sides will be your own. Why should you look on me with surprise, my child? that beauty on which perhaps my heart has often dwelt too proudly, is not my gift nor of your creation. The Great Being who has given you those charms of face and form will mark how His gift is used; and oh, forget not for one moment His all-seeing eye is as much upon you in the crowded ball as

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in the retirement of your own room. You will be exposed to more temptations than have yet been yours; the most dangerous temptations, adulation, triumph, exciting pleasures of every kind, will be around you. The world in radiant beauty will loudly call upon you to follow it alone, to resign all things to become its votary; the trial of prosperity will indeed be yours. Caroline, my child, for my sake, if not for your own, resist them all. My happiness is in your hands. Seek your God in this ordeal, even more than you would in that of adversity; there the spirit naturally flies from earth, here it clings tenaciously to the world. Pray to Him to resist the temptations that will surround—implore Him to teach you the best use of those charms He has bestowed on you. Forsake Him not; Caroline, I conjure you, be not drawn away from Him. Do not let your thoughts be so wholly engrossed by pleasure as to prevent your bestowing on Him but one hour of your day. Let me clasp my child to my heart, when we return to Oakwood, unsullied, untouched by the stains of the world. Let me have the blessed comfort of seeing my Caroline return to the home of her childhood the same innocent happy being she was when she left. I have ever endeavored to make you happy, to give you those pleasures you naturally desire, to form your character not only for the happiness of this world, but for that of the next; then if you are ever tempted to do wrong, if no higher consideration bids you pause, think on your mother, Caroline; remember my happiness or misery greatly depends on you, and, oh, if you have ever loved me, pause ere you proceed."

"Mother, do not doubt me; Caroline Hamilton will never sully the name she bears," replied Caroline, her eyes flashing, and speaking proudly, to conceal the emotions her mother's words had involuntarily produced.

Mrs. Hamilton gazed on the haughty and satisfied security the features of her child expressed. A more softened feeling would at that moment better have pleased the yearning heart of the mother, but she checked the rising sigh of disappointment, and folding Caroline to her bosom, she imprinted a fond kiss on her noble brow, and murmuring, "God in heaven bless you, my child, and grant you sufficient strength," they descended the stairs together.

Brilliant indeed was the scene that met the dazzled eyes of Caroline, as she entered the elegant suite of rooms of the Duchess of Rothbury. The highest rank, the greatest talent,

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the loveliest of beauty's daughters, the manliest and noblest of her sons, were all assembled in that flood of light which every apartment might be termed. (Yet could the varied countenances of these noble crowds have clearly marked the character within, what a strange and varied page in the book of human life might that ball have unfolded.)

But various as are the characters that compose an assemblage such as this, the tone is generally given by the character and manner of the lady of the house, and her Grace the Duchess of Rothbury was admirably fitted for the position she filled. A daughter of fashion, bred up from her earliest years in scenes of luxury and pomp, she had yet escaped the selfishness, the artificial graces, which are there generally predominant. She had married early in life, a marriage *à la mode*, that is to say, not of love, but of interest on the part of her parents, and on her own, dazzled, perhaps, by the exalted rank of the man who had made her an offer of his hand. They were happy. The highly-principled mind of the Duchess revolted from that conduct, which would, even in the *on dit* of a censorious world, have called the very faintest whisper on her name; and her husband, struck by the unwavering honor and integrity of her conduct, gradually deserted the haunts of ignoble pleasures which he had been wont to frequent, and paid her those marks of consideration and respect, both in public and private life, which she so greatly deserved. A large family had been the fruits of this union, all of whom, except her two youngest daughters and two of her sons, were married, and to the satisfaction of their parents. There was a degree of reserve, amounting to severity, in the character of the Duchess, which prevented that same affectionate confidence between her and her children as subsisted in Mr. Hamilton's family. Yet she had been a kind and careful mother, and her children ever proved, that surrounded as she constantly was by the fashionable and the gay, she had presided over the education of her daughters, and had been more than usually particular in the choice of governesses. Violent as she might be considered in her prejudices for and against, yet there was that in her manner which alike prevented the petty feelings of dislike and envy, and equally debarred her from being regarded with any of that warm affection, for which no one imagined how frequently she had pined. She stood alone, respected, by many revered, and she was now content with this, though her youth had longed for somewhat more. Her chosen friend, spite of the difference

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of rank, had been Mr. Hamilton's mother, and she had watched with the jealousy of true friendship the object of Arthur Hamilton's love.

A brief yet penetrating survey of Emmeline Manvers' character she took, and was satisfied. The devotion of Mrs. Hamilton, for so many years, to her children, she had ever admired, and frequently defended her with warmth when any one ventured before her to condemn her conduct. Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton regarded her with reverence and affection, and were gratified at that kindness which insisted that the *entrée* of Caroline should take place at her house.

The Earl and Countess Elmore were also pre-eminent among the guests—young, noble, exquisitely lovely, the latter at once riveted all eyes, yet by the graceful dignity of her manner, repelled all advances of familiarity. She might have been conscious of her charms, she could not fail to be, but she only valued them as having attracted towards her the man she loved. She only used them to endear him to his home; and it was when alone with the Earl, that the sweet playfulness of her character was displayed to its full extent, and scarcely could he then believe her the same being who in society charmed as much by her dignity and elegance, as by her surpassing beauty. The family of the Marquis of Malvern were also present; they had been long known to Mr. and Mrs Hamilton, who were glad to resume an intimacy which had been checked by their retirement, but which had ever been remembered with mutual pleasure. The Earl of St. Eval eldest son of the Marquis, might have been thought by many, who only knew him casually, as undeserving of the high renown he enjoyed; and many young ladies would have wondered at Emmeline Hamilton's undisguised admiration. Handsome he certainly was not; yet intelligence and nobleness were stamped upon that broad straight brow, and those dark eyes were capable at times of speaking the softest emotions of the human heart. But it was only when he permitted himself to speak with energy that his countenance was displayed to advantage, and then the bright rays of intellect and goodness which gilded every feature, aided by the eloquent tones of his full rich voice, would have made the most careless turn and look again, and ask why they admired; but such times were few. Reserved, almost painfully so, he was generally prone in such scenes as this to stand alone, for few indeed were those of either sex with whom the soul of Eugene St. Eval could hold commune; but

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this night there was more animation than usual glittering in his dark eyes. He was the first of the admiring crowd to join Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton's party, and petition for the hand of Caroline in the next quadrille. It was with a smile of proud satisfaction her father relinquished her to the young man, for she had consented, although the watchful eye of her mother observed her glance round the room, as if in search for some other, and a shade of disappointment pass over her brow, that said her search was fruitless; that feeling was but momentary, however. She joined the festive throng, and her young heart beat quicker as she met the many glances of undisguised admiration fixed constantly upon her. Seldom had Mr. Hamilton been so beset as he was that night by the number of young men who pressed forward to implore him for an introduction to his beautiful daughter; and Caroline's every anticipation of triumph was indeed fulfilled. Her mother was right. Reality was in this case far more dazzling than even imagination had been. There were many in that splendid scene equally, perhaps even more beautiful than Caroline Hamilton, but she possessed the charm of which almost all around her were deprived, that of novelty. She was, indeed, a novice amid scenes of fashion, and the genuine pleasure her countenance expressed, appeared a relief when compared to many around her. The name of Hamilton had never been entirely forgotten in London. Their singularity in living so long in unbroken retirement had been by many ridiculed, by others condemned, as an attempt to appear better than their neighbors; and many were the speculations as to whether the saintly Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton would really do such a wicked thing as introduce their daughters into society; or whether they would keep the poor girls in the country like nuns, to be moped to death. Great, therefore, was the astonishment of some, and equally great the pleasure to others, when Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton reappeared amongst their London friends; and that night the warm greetings of many old friends who thronged around them, eager to introduce to their notice the young members of their families, afforded a pleasing satisfaction to the heart of Mrs. Hamilton, whose gentle courtesy and winning smile they found had not in the least deserted her. The feelings of a mother swelled warmly within her as she gazed on her child; her fond heart throbbed with chastened pride, as she marked the unfeigned and respectful admiration Caroline received, and these emotions, combined with the pleasure she felt at beholding

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again well-remembered faces, and hearing the glad tones of eager greeting, caused this evening to be equally as pleasurable to her, though in a different way, as it was to Caroline.

The attentions of Eugene St. Eval to Miss Hamilton continued as unintermitting as they were respectful the whole of that night; and Caroline, if she did not encourage, certainly forbade them not. She listened to him with more attention she appeared more animated with him than with any of her other partners, one, perhaps, alone excepted, and yet she had taught her young heart to receive impressions to his prejudice, which Annie never permitted an opportunity to pass without carefully instilling. Why did she then permit his attentions? She knew not; while listening to his voice, there was a fascination about him she could not resist, but in her solitary hours she studiously banished his image to give place to one whom by the representations of Annie, she persuaded herself that she loved alone.

Genuine, indeed, had been the enjoyment of Caroline Hamilton, from the first moment she had entered the ball-room; but if it could be heightened, it was when, about the middle of the evening, Lord Alphingham entered. A party of gay young men instantly surrounded him, but breaking from them all, he attached himself the greater part of the night to Mr. Hamilton. Only two quadrilles he danced with Caroline, but they were enough to aid the schemes of Annie. She was at hand to excite, to an almost painful degree, the mind of her friend, to speak in rapturous praise of Lord Alphingham, to chain him now and then to her side, and yet so contrive, that the whole of his conversation was with Caroline; and yet the conduct of Annie Grahame had been such that night as rather to excite the admiration than the censure of Mr. Hamilton. Playfully he combated the prejudice of his wife, who as sportively owned that Miss Grahame's conduct in society was different to that she had anticipated; but her penetrative mind felt not the more at ease when she thought on the friendship that subsisted between Annie and her child.

"Am I dreaming, or is it Mrs. Hamilton I again behold?" exclaimed an elderly gentleman, as she came forward, and hastily advancing, seized both her hands, and pressed them with unfeigned warmth and pleasure, which greeting Mrs. Hamilton as cordially returned. He was a very old friend of her father's, and had attained by promotion his present high rank of Admiral of the Blue, but had been the first captain

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under whose orders her lamented brother sailed. Very many, therefore, were the associations that filled her mind as she beheld him, and her mild eyes for a moment glistened in uncontrollable emotion.

"How very many changes have taken place since we have come alongside, Mrs. Hamilton," the old veteran said, gazing on the blooming matron before him with almost paternal pleasure. "Poor Delmont! could his kind heart have borne up against the blow of poor Charles's fate, he surely would have been happy, if all the tales I hear of his daughter Emmeline be true."

"Come and judge for yourself, Sir George; my home must ever be open to my father's dearest friend," replied Mrs. Hamilton, endeavoring by speaking playfully to conceal the painful reminiscences called forth by his words, "I will not vouch for the truth of any thing you may have heard about us in London. You must contrive to moor your ship into the harbor of Oakwood, and thus gratify us all."

"Ay, ay; take care that I do not cast anchor there so long, that you will find the best thing will be to cut the cables, send me adrift, and thus get rid of me," replied the old sailor, delighted at her addressing him in nautical phrase. "Your appearance here has belied half the stories I heard; so now that you have given me permission, I shall set sail to discover the truth of the rest."

"You heard, I suppose, that Mr. Hamilton never intended his children to visit London? They were too good, too—what may I term it?—too perfect to mingle with their fellow-creatures; is not that it, Admiral?" demanded Mrs. Hamilton, with a smile.

"Ay, ay; something very like it,—but glad to see the wind is changed from that corner. Don't like solitude, particularly for young folks,—and how many are here?"

"Of my children?" The veteran nodded. "But one, my eldest girl. I do not consider her sister quite old enough to be introduced."

"And you left her in harbor, and only permitted one frigate to cruise. If she had any of her uncle Charles's spirit, she would have shown some little insubordination at that piece of discipline, Mrs. Hamilton," said the old man, joyously.

"Not if my authority is established somewhat like Sir George's, on the basis of affection," replied Mrs. Hamilton, again smiling.

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"Ay, you have learnt that secret of government, have you? Now who would think this was the little quiet girl I had dandled on my knee, and told her tales of storm and war that made her shudder? And where are your sons?"

"Both at college."

"What, neither of them a chip of the old block, and neither of them for the sea? Don't like their taste. No spirit of salt-water within them."

"But neither of them deficient in spirit for a life on shore. But, however, to set your heart at ease, for the naval honor of our family, Sir George, I have a nephew, who, I think, some few years hence will prove a brave and gallant son of Neptune. The accounts we have of him are most pleasing. He has inherited all poor Charles's spirit and daring, as well as that true courage for which you have said my brother was so remarkable."

"Glad of it—glad of it; but what nephew? who is he? A nephew of Mr. Hamilton's will not raise the glory of the Delmont family; and you had only one brother, if I remember rightly."

"Have you quite forgotten the beautiful girl who, when I last had the pleasure of meeting you in such a scene as this, was the object of universal attraction? You surely remember my father's favorite Eleanor, Sir George?"

"Eleanor—Eleanor—let me think;" and the old sailor for a moment put himself in a musing attitude, and then starting, exclaimed, "to be sure I do; the loveliest girl I ever cast eyes upon;—and what has become of her? By the by, there was some story about her, was there not? She chose a husband for herself, and ran off, and broke her poor father's heart. Where is she now?"

"Let her faults be forgotten, my dear Sir George," replied Mrs. Hamilton, with some emotion. "They were fully, painfully repented. Let them die with her."

"Die! Is she, too, dead? What, that graceful sylph, that exquisite creature I see before me now, in all the pride of conscious loveliness!" and the veteran drew his rough hand across his eyes in unfeigned emotion, then hastily recovering himself, he said, "and this boy—this sailor is her son. I can hardly believe it possible. Why, he surely cannot be old enough to go to sea."

"You forget the number of years that have passed, Sir George. Edward is now eighteen, as old, if not older, than his mother was when you last saw her."

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"And when did poor Eleanor die?"

"Six years ago. She had been left a widow in India, and only reached her native land to breathe her last in my arms. You will be pleased, I think, with her daughter, though, on second thought, perhaps, she may not be quite lively enough for you; however, I must beg your notice for her, as her attachment to her brother is so excessive, that all relating to the sea is to her in the highest degree interesting."

"And do your sister's children live with you—had their father no relations?

"None; and even if he had, I should have petitioned to bring them up and adopt them as my own. Poor children, when their mother died, their situation was indeed melancholy Helpless orphans of ten and scarcely twelve, cast on a strange land, without one single friend to whom they could look for succor or protection. My heart bled for them, and never once have I regretted my decision."

The old man looked at her glowing cheek in admiration, and pressing her hand, he said warmly, prefacing his words, as he always did, with the affirmative "ay, ay."

"Your father's daughter must be somewhat different to others of her rank. I must come and see you, positively I must. Wind and tide will be strongly against me, if you do not see me in a few days anchoring off your coast. No storms disturb your harbor, I fancy. But what has become of your husband—your daughter? let me see all I can belonging to you. Come, Mrs. Hamilton, crowd sail, and tow me at once to my wished-for port."

Entering playfully into the veteran's humor, Mrs. Hamilton took his arm and returned to the ball-room, where she was speedily joined by her husband, who welcomed Sir George Wilmot with as much warmth and cordiality as his wife had done, and as soon as the quadrille was finished, a glance from her mother brought Caroline and her partner, Lord Alphingham, to her side.

The astonishment of Sir George, as Mrs. Hamilton introduced the blooming girl before him as her daughter, was so irresistibly comic, that no one present could prevent a smile, and that surprise was heightened when, in answer to his supposition that she must be the eldest of Mrs. Hamilton's family, Mrs. Hamilton replied that her two sons were both older, and Caroline was, indeed, the youngest but one.

"Then I tell you what, Mrs. Hamilton," the old veteran

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said, "Old Time has been playing tricks with me, and drawing me much nearer eternity than I at all imagined myself, or else he has stopped with me and gone on with you."

"Or, rather, my good friend," replied Mr. Hamilton, "you can only trace the hand of Time upon yourself, having no children in whose increasing years you can behold him, and, therefore, he is very likely to slip the cable before you are aware; but with us such cannot be."

"Ay, ay, Hamilton, suppose it must be so—wish I had some children of my own, but shall come and watch Time's progress on these instead. Ah, Miss Hamilton, why am I such an old man? I see all the youngsters running off with the pretty girls, and I cannot venture to ask one to dance with me."

"May I venture to ask you then, Sir George? The name of Admiral Wilmot would be sufficient for any girl, I should think, to feel proud of her partner, even were he much older and much less gallant than you, Sir George," answered Caroline, with ready courtesy, for she had often heard her mother speak of him, and his manner pleased her.

"Well, that's a pretty fair challenge, Sir George; you must take up the glove thrown from so fair a hand," observed Lord Alphingham, with a smile that, to Caroline, and even to her mother, rendered his strikingly handsome features yet handsomer. "Shall I relinquish my partner?

"No, no, Alphingham; you are better suited to her here. At home—at your *own* home, Miss Hamilton, one night, I shall remind you of your promise, and we will trip it together. Now I can only thank you for your courtesy; it has done my heart good, and reconciled me to my old age."

"I may chance to find a rival at home, Sir George. If you see my sister, you will not be content with me. She will use every effort to surpass me in your good graces; for when I tell her I have seen the brave admiral whose exploits have often caused her cheek to flush with pride—patriot pride she calls it—she will be wild till she has seen you."

"Will she—will she, indeed? Come and see her to-morrow; tell her so, with an old man's love, and that I scolded your mother heartily for not bringing her to-night. Mind orders; let me see if you are sailor enough instinctively to obey an old captain's orders."

"Trust me, Sir George," replied Caroline, laughingly, and a young man at that instant addressing her by name, she bowed gracefully to the veteran, and turned towards him who spoke.

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"Miss Hamilton, I claim your promise for this quadrille," said Lord Henry D'Este.

"Good bye," said Sir George. "I shall claim you for my partner when I see you at home."

"St. Eval dancing again. Merciful powers! we certainly shall have the roof tumbling over our heads, exclaimed Lord Henry, as he and Caroline found themselves *vis a vis* to the earl of whom he spoke.

"Why, is it so very extraordinary that a young man should dance?" demanded Caroline.

"A philosopher, as he is, decidedly. You do not know him, Miss Hamilton. He travelled all over Europe, I believe, really for the sake of improvement, instead of enjoying all the fun he might have had; he stored his brain with all sorts of knowledge, collecting material and stealing legends to write a book. I went with him part of the way, but became so tired of my companion, that I turned recreant and fled, to enjoy a more spirited excursion of my own. I tell him, whenever I want a lecture on all subjects, I shall come to him. I call him the Walking Cyclopædia; and only fancy such a personage dancing a quadrille. What lady can have the courage to turn over the leaves of the Cyclopædia in a quadrille? let me see. Oh, Lady Lucy Melville, our noble hostess's daughter. She pretends to be a bit of a blue, therefore they are not so ill-matched as I imagined; however, she is not very bad—not a deep blue, only just tinged with celestial azure. Sweet creature, how you will be edified before your lesson is over. Look, Miss Hamilton, on the other side of the Cyclopædia. That good lady has been the last seven years dancing with all her night and main for a husband. There is another, striving by an air of elegant hauteur, to prove she is something very great, when really, she is nothing at all. There's a girl just introduced, as our noble poet says."

"Take care, take care, Lord Henry; you are treading on dangerous ground," exclaimed Caroline, unable to prevent laughing at the comic manner in which her companion criticised the dancers. "You forget that I too have only just been released, and this is only my first glimpse of the world."

"You do me injustice, Miss Hamilton. I am too delightfully and refreshingly reminded of that truth to forget it for one instant. You may have only just made your *debut*, but you have not been schooled and scolded, and frightened into propriety as that unfortunate girl has. If she has smiled once

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too naturally, spoken one word too much, made one step wrong, or said sir, my lord, your lordship, once too often, she will have such a lecture to-morrow, she will never wish to go to a ball again."

"Poor girl!" said Caroline, in a tone of genuine pity, which caused a smile from her partner.

"She is not worthy of your pity, Miss Hamilton; she is hardened to it all. What a set we are dancing with, men and women, all heartless alike; but I want to know what magic wand has touched St. Eval. I do believe it must be your eyes, Miss Hamilton. He talks to his partner, and looks at you; tries to do two things at once, listen to her and hear your voice. You are the enchantress, depend upon it."

A glow of triumph burned on the heart of Caroline at these words. For though rather prejudiced against St. Eval by the arts of Annie, still, to make an impression on one to whom she had heard was invulnerable to all, to make the calm, and some said, severely stoical, St. Eval bend beneath her power, was a triumph she determined to achieve. That spirit of coquetry, so fatal to her aunt, the ill-fated Eleanor, was as innate in the bosom of Caroline; no opportunity had yet afforded to give it play, still the seeds were there, and she could not resist the temptation now presented. Even in her childhood, Mrs. Hamilton had marked this fatal propensity. Every effort had been put in force to check it, every gentle counsel given, but arrested in its growth though it was, erased entirely it could not be. The principles of virtue had been too carefully instilled, for coquetry to attain the same ascendency and indulgence with Caroline as it had with her aunt, yet she felt she could no longer control the inclination which the present opportunity afforded her to use her power.

"Do you go to the Marchioness of Malvern's fête, next week?" demanded Lord Henry. Caroline answered in the affirmative.

"I am glad of it. The Walking Cyclopædia may make himself as agreeable there as he has so marvelously done to-night. You will be in fairy land. He has brought flowers from every country and reared them for his mother, till they have become the admiration of all for miles around. I told him he looked like a market gardener, collecting flowers from every place he went to. I dragged him away several times, and told him he certainly would be taken for a country booby, and scolded him for demeaning his rank with such ignoble plersures, and what wise answer do you think he made me?"

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"A very excellent one, I have no doubt."

"Or it would not come from such a learned personage Miss Hamilton. Really it was so philosophic, I was obliged to learn it as a lesson to retain it. That he, superior as he deemed himself, and that wild flower which he tended with so much care, were alike the work of Infinite Wisdom, and as such, the study of one could not demean the other. I stared at him, and for the space of a week dubbed him the Preaching Pilgrim; but I was soon tired of that, and resumed his former one, which comprises all I wonder at what letter the walking volume will be opened at his mother's fête?"

"I should imagine B," said Caroline, smiling.

"B—B—what does B stand for? I have forgotten how to spell—let me see. Ah! I have it,—excellent, admirable! Miss Hamilton. Lecture on Botany from the Walking Cyclopædia —bravo! We had better scrape up all our learning, to prove we are not perfect ignoramuses on the subject."

Caroline laughingly agreed; and the quadrille being finished, Lord Henry succeeded in persuading her to accompany him to the refreshment-room.

In the meanwhile, perfectly unconscious that he had been the subject of the animated conversation of his *vis à vis*, St. Eval was finding more and more to admire in Miss Hamilton. He conducted his partner to her seat as she desired, and then strolled towards Mr. Hamilton's party, in the hope that Caroline would soon rejoin her mother; but Annie had been in the refreshment-room, and she did not reappear for some little time. Mrs. Hamilton had at length been enabled to seek Lady Helen Grahame, with whom she remained conversing, for she felt, though the delay was unavoidable, she partly deserved the reproach with which Lady Helen greeted her, when she entered, for permitting the whole evening to pass without coming near her. Mrs. Hamilton perceieved, with regret, that she was more fitted for the quiet of her own boudoir, than the glare and heat of crowded rooms. Gently she ventured to expostulate with her on her endeavors, and Lady Helen acknowledged she felt quite unequal to the exertion, but that the persuasions of her daughter had brought her there. She was too indolent to add, she had seen nothing of Annie the whole evening; nor did she wish to say anything that might increase the disapprobation with which she sometimes felt, though Annie heeded it not, Mrs. Hamilton regarded her child. It was admiration, almost veneration, which Lady Helen felt for Mrs. Hamilton

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and no one could have imagined how very frequently the indolent but well-meaning woman had regretted what she deemed was her utter inability to act with the same firmness that characterized her friend. She was delighted at the notice Lilla ever received from her; but blinded by the artful manners of her elder girl, she often wished that Annie had been the favorite instead. There was somewhat in Mrs. Hamilton's manner that night that caused her to feel her own inferiority more than ever; but no self-reproach mingled with the feeling. She could not be like her, and then why should she expect or deplore what was impossible. Leaning on Mrs. Hamilton's arm, she resolved, however, to visit the ball-room, and they reached Mr. Hamilton at the instant Grahame joined them.

"You here, Grahame!" exclaimed his friend, as he approached. "I thought you had forsworn such things."

"I make an exception to-night," he answered. "I wished to see my fair friend Caroline where I have longed to see her."

"You are honored, indeed, Mrs. Hamilton," Lady Helen could not refrain from saying. "He was not present at the *entrée* even of his own daughter."

"And why was I not, Lady Helen? because I would not by my presence give the world reason to say I also approved of the very early age at which Miss Grahame was introduced. If I do not mistake, she is four months younger than Caroline, and yet my daughter is no longer a novice in such scenes as these."

Lady Helen shrunk in terror from the stern glance of her husband, who little knew the pain he inflicted; and Mrs. Hamilton hastily, but cautiously drew her away to enter into conversation with the Marchioness of Malvern, who was near them, which little manœuvre quickly removed the transient cloud; and though soon again compelled to seek the shelter of the quiet little room she had quitted, the friendly kindness of Mrs. Hamilton succeeded in making Lady Helen's evening end more agreeably than it had begun.

"Are you only just released, Grahame?" demanded Lord Alphingham, who still remained near Mr. Hamilton.

"You are less fortunate than I was, or perhaps you will think, in parliamentary concerns, more so; but as the ball was uppermost in my thoughts this evening, I was glad to find myself at liberty above an hour ago."

"Is there nothing, then, stirring in the Upper House?"

"Nothing; I saw many of the noble members fast asleep,

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and those who spoke said little to the purpose. When do you gentlemen of the Lower House send up your bill? it will be a charity to give us something to do."

"We shall be charitable then on Friday next, and I much doubt if you do not have some warm debating work. If we succeed, it will be a glorious triumph; the Whigs are violent against us, and they are by far the strongest party. I depend greatly on your eloquence, Alphingham."

"It is yours to the full extent of its power, my good friend; it carries some weight along with it, I believe, and I would gladly use it in a good cause."

"Did you speak to-night, Grahame?" Mr. Hamilton asked, evincing by his animated countenance an interest in politics, which, from his retired life, no one believed that he possessed. Grahame eagerly entered into the detail of that night's debate, and for a little time the three gentlemen were absorbed in politics alone. The approach of Caroline and her mother, however, caused Grahame suddenly to break off in his speech.

"A truce with debates, for the present," he gayly exclaimed, "Hamilton, I never saw Caroline's extraordinary likeness to you till this moment. What a noble-looking girl she is! Ah, Hamilton, I could pardon you if you were much prouder of your children than you are."

An involuntary sigh broke from his lips as he spoke, but checking it, he hastened to Caroline, and amused her with animated discourse, till Lord Alphingham and Eugene St. Eval at the same instant approached, the one to claim, the other to request, Caroline as his partner in the last quadrille before supper. The shade of deep disappointment which passed over the young Earl's expressive countenance as Caroline eagerly accepted the Viscount's offered arm, and owned she had been engaged to him some time, at once confirmed to her flattered fancy the truth of Lord Henry's words, and occasioned a feeling near akin to pleasure in the equally observant mother. Mrs. Hamilton shrunk with horror at the idea of introducing her child into society merely for the purpose of decoying a husband; but she must have been void of natural feeling had not the thought very often crossed her mind, that the time was drawing nigh when her daughter's earthly destiny would, in all probability, be fixed for ever; and in the midst of the tremblings of maternal love the natural wish would mingle, that noble rank and manly virtue might be the endowments of him who would wed her Caroline, and amongst those

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noble youths with whom she had lately mingled, she had seen but one her fond heart deemed on all points worthy of her child, and that one was the young Earl Eugene St. Eval. That he was attracted, her penetrating eye could scarcely doubt, but farther she would not think; and so great was her sensitiveness on this head, that much as she admired the young man, she was much more reserved with him than she would have been had she suspected nothing of his newly-dawning feelings.

St. Eval did not join in the quadrille, and after lingering by Mrs. Hamilton till she was invited to the supper-room, he aroused the increased merriment of his tormentor, Lord Henry by offering her his arm, conducting her to supper, and devoting himself to her, he declared, as if she were the youngest and prettiest girl in the room.

"Paying the agreeable to mamma, to win the good graces of *la fille.* Admirable diplomacy; Lord St. Eval, I wish you joy of your new talent;" maliciously remarked Lord Henry, as the Earl and his companion passed him. A glance from those dark eyes, severe enough to have sent terror to the soul of any less reckless than Lord Henry, was St. Eval's only reply, and he passed on; and seldom did Mrs. Hamilton find a companion more to her taste in a supper-room than the young Earl. The leaves of the Walking Cyclopædia were indeed then opened, Henry D'Este would have said, for on very many subjects did St. Eval allow himself that evening to converse, which, except to his mother and sisters, were ever locked in the recesses of his own reflecting mind; but there was a kindness, almost maternal, which Mrs. Hamilton unconsciously used to every young person who sought her company, and that charm the young and gifted nobleman never could resist. He spoke of her sons in a manner that could not fail to attract a mother's heart. The six months he had spent with them at college had been sufficient for him to form an intimate friendship with Percy, whose endeavors to gain his esteem he had been unable to resist; while he regretted that the reserved disposition of Herbert, being so like his own, had prevented his knowing him so well as his brother. He spoke too of a distant relative of Mrs. Hamilton's, the present Lord Delmont, in whom, as the representative of her ancient family, she was much interested. St. Eval described with eloquence the lovely villa he occupied on the banks of Lago Guardia, near the frontiers of the Tyrol, the health of his only sister, some few years

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younger than himself, not permitting them to live in England; he had given up all the invitations to home and pleasure held out to him by his father-land, and retiring to Italy, devoted himself entirely to his mother and sister.

"He is a brother and son after your own heart, Mrs. Hamilton," concluded St. Eval, with animation, "and that is the highest compliment I can pay him."

Mrs. Hamilton smiled, and as she gazed on the glowing features of the young man, she thought he who could so well appreciate such virtues could not be—nay, she knew he was not—deficient in them himself, and stronger than ever became her secret wish; but she hastily banished it, and gave her sole attention to the interesting subjects on which St. Eval continued to speak.

For some few hours after supper the ball continued, with even, perhaps more spirit than it had commenced; but St. Eval did not ask Caroline to dance again. He fancied she preferred Alphingham's attentions, and his sensitive mind shrunk from being again refused. Caroline knew not the heart of him over whom she had resolved to use her power, perhaps if she had, she would have hesitated in her determination. The least encouragement made his heart glow with an uncontrollable sensation of exquisite pleasure, while repulse bade it sink back with an equal if not a greater degree of pain. St. Eval was conscious of this weakness in his character; he was aware that he possessed a depth of feeling, which, unless steadily controlled, would tend only to his misery; and it was for this he clothed himself in impenetrable reserve, and obtained from the world the character of being proud and disagreeable. He dreaded the first entrance of love within his bosom, for instinctively he felt that his very sensitiveness would render the passion more his misery than his joy. We are rather skeptics in the doctrine of love at first sight, but in this case it was fervid and enduring, as if it had risen on the solid basis of intimacy and esteem. From the first hour he had spent in the society of Caroline Hamilton, Eugene St. Eval loved. He tried to subdue and conquer his newly-awakened feelings, and would think he had succeeded, but the next hour he passed in her society brought the truth clearer than ever before his eyes; her image alone occupied his heart. He shrunk, in his overwrought sensitiveness, from paying her those attentions which would have marked his preference; he did not wish to excite the remarks of the world, nor did he feel that he possessed sufficient courage to bear the repulse,

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with which, if she did not regard him, and if she were the girl he fancied her, she would check his forwardness. But his heart beat high, and it was with some difficulty he controlled his emotion, when he perceived that Caroline refused to dance even with Lord Alphingham, on several occasions to continue conversing with himself. How his noble spirit would have chafed and bled, could he have known it was love of power and coquetry that dictated her manner, and not regard, as for the time he allowed himself to fancy.

The evening closed, the noble guests departed, and daylight had resumed its reign over the earth by the time Mr. Hamilton's carriage stopped in Berkeley Square. Animatedly had Caroline conversed with her parents on the pleasures of the evening during their drive; but when she reached her own room, when Martyn had left her, and she was alone, she was not quite sure if a few faint whisperings of self-reproach did not in a degree alloy the retrospection of this her first glimpse of the gay world; but quickly—perhaps too quickly—they were banished. The attentions of Lord Alphingham—heightened in their charm by Miss Grahame's positive assurance to her friend that the Viscount was attracted, there was not the very slightest doubt of it—and the proposed pleasure of compelling the proud, reserved St. Eval to yield to her fascinations, alone occupied her fancy. To make him her captive would be triumph indeed. She wished, too, to show Annie she was not so completely under control as she fancied; that she, too, could act with the spirit of a girl of fashion; and to choose St. Eval, and succeed—charm him to her side—force him to pay her attentions which no other received, would, indeed, prove to her fashionable companions that she was not so entirely governed by her mother, so very simple and spiritless as they supposed. Her power should do that which all had attempted in vain. Her cheek glowed, her heart burned with the bright hope of expected triumph, and when she at length sunk to sleep, it was to dream of St. Eval at her feet.

Oh! were the counsels, the example, the appeal of her mother all forgotten? Was this a mother's recompense? Alas! alas!

CHAPTER IV.

Numerous were the cards and invitations now left at Mr Hamilton's door; and the world, in its most tempting form,

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was indeed spread before Caroline, although, perhaps, compared with the constant routine of pleasure pursued by some young ladies who attended two or three assemblies each of the six nights out of the seven, her life could scarcely be called gay. Mr. Hamilton had drawn a line, and, difficult as it was to keep, he adhered to his resolution, notwithstanding the entreaties of his friends, and very often those of his daughter. A dinner-party and a ball he would sometimes permit Caroline to attend in one day, but the flying from house to house, to taste of every pleasure offered, he never would allow. Nor did he or any member of his family ever attend the Opera on Saturday night, however great might be the attractions. To Emmeline this was a great privation, as poetry and music had ever been her chief delights, and the loss of even one night's enjoyment was felt severely; but she acquiesced without a murmur, appreciating the truth of her father's remark, that it was impossible to pay attention to the Sabbath duties when the previous evening had been thus employed. She knew, too, how difficult it was to attend to her studies (due regard for which her parents required amidst every recreation) on the Wednesday, with every air she had so delighted in the previous night ringing in her ears. Those who were eager to condemn Mrs. Hamilton whenever they could, declared it was the greatest inconsistency to take Emmeline to the Opera, and permit her to appear so often in company at home, and yet in other matters be so strict; why could she not bring her out at once, instead of only tantalizing her? but Mrs. Hamilton could never do any thing like any body else. Her daughters were much to be pitied; and as for her niece, she must pass a miserable life, for she was scarcely ever seen. They had no doubt, with all Mrs. Hamilton's pretensions to goodness, that her poor niece was utterly neglected, and kept quite in the background; because she was so beautiful, Mrs. Hamilton was jealous of the notice she might obtain.

So thought, and so very often spoke, the ill-natured half of the world, who, in reality, jealous and displeased at being excluded from Mr Hamilton's visiting list, did every thing in their power to lessen the estimation in which the family was held. In this, however they could not succeed, nor in causing pain to to those whom they wished to wound. Such petty malice demanded not a second thought from minds so well regulated as those of Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton. Mrs. Hamilton, indeed, turned their ill-natured remarks to advantage, for in-

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stead of neglecting or wholly despising them, she considered them in her own heart, and in solitary reflection pondered deeply if she in any way deserved them. She knew that the lesson of self-knowledge is never entirely learnt; and she knew too, that an enemy may say that in ill-will or malice which may have some foundation, though our friends, aided by self-love, may have hidden the truth from us. Deeply did this noble woman think on her plan of conduct; severely she scrutinized its every motive, and she was at peace. Before entering upon it she had implored the Divine blessing, and she felt that, in the case of Emmeline and Ellen, her prayers for guidance had not been unheeded. Perhaps her conduct, with regard to the former, might have appeared inconsistent; but she felt no ill-will towards those who condemned, knowing the disposition of her child, and certainly those who thus spoke did not.

Although there was little more than fourteen months' difference between the age of the sisters, Emmeline was so much a child in simplicity and feeling, that her mother felt assured it would neither be doing her good nor tending to her happiness to introduce her with her sister; as, from the little difference in their ages, some mothers might have been inclined to do. Yet she did not wish to keep her in such entire seclusion as some, even of her friends advised, but permitted her the enjoyment of those innocent pleasures natural to her taste. Emmeline had never once murmured at this arrangement; however it interfered with her most earnest wishes, her confidence in ner parents was such, that she ever submitted to their wishes with cheerfulness. Mrs. Hamilton knew and sympathized in her feelings at leaving Oakwood. She felt there were indeed few pleasures in London that could compensate to a disposition such as Emmeline's for those she had left. She had seen, with joy and thankfulness, the conquest of self which her child had so perseveringly achieved; and surely she was not wrong to reward her, by giving her every gratification in her power, and endeavoring to make her as happy as she was at Oakwood. Emmeline was no longer a child, and these pleasures interfered not with the attention her parents still wished her to bestow on the completion of her education. With all the innocence and quiet of a young child she enjoyed the select parties given by her mother with the same zest, but with the poetic feelings of dawning youth. She absolutely revelled in the Opera, and there her mother generally accompanied her once a week An artist might have found a

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pleasing study in the contemplation of that young, bright face, as she sat entranced, every sense absorbed in the music which she heard, the varying expression of her countenance reflecting every emotion acted before her. At such moments the fond mother felt it to be impossible to deny the young enthusiast the rich treat these musical recreations afforded. A smile or look of sympathy was ever ready to meet the often uncontrolled expressions of delight which Emmeline could not suppress, for in thus listening to the compositions of our great masters, even those much older than Emmeline can seldom entirely command their emotions. Natural as were the manners of Caroline in public, they almost resembled art when compared with those of her sister. Mrs. Hamilton's lesson on self-control had not been forgotten. Emmeline generally contrived to behave with perfect propriety, except in moments of excitement such as these, where natural enthusiasm and almost childish glee would have their play, and her mother could not, would not check them.

With regard to Ellen, the thoughtless remarks of the world were indeed unfounded, as all who recollect the incidents detailed in former pages will readily believe. Her health still continued so delicate as frequently to occasion her aunt some anxiety. Through the winter, strange to say, she had not suffered, but the spring brought on, at intervals, those depressing feelings of languor which Mrs. Hamilton hoped had been entirely conquered. The least exertion or excitement caused her to suffer the following day, and therefore, except at very small parties, she did not appear even at home. No one could suspect from her quiet and controlled manner, and her apparently inanimate though beautiful features, that she was as enthusiastic in mind and in the delights of the Opera as her cousin Emmeline. By no one we do not mean her aunt, for Mrs. Hamilton could now trace every feeling of that young and sorrowful heart, and she saw with regret, that in her niece's present state of health, even that pleasure must be denied her, for the very exertion attendant on it was too much. Ellen never expressed regret, nor did she ever breathe even to her aunt how often, how very often, she longed once again to enjoy the fresh air of Oakwood, for London to her possessed not even the few attractions it did to Emmeline. She ever struggled to be cheerful, to smile when her aunt looked anxiously at her, and strove to assure her that she was happy, perfectly happy. Her never appearing as Emmeline did, and so very seldom

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even at home, certainly gave matter for observation to those who, seeking for it, refused to believe the true reason of her retirement. Miss Harcourt, though she steadfastly refused to go out with her friend—for Mrs. Hamilton never could allow that she filled any situation save that of a friend and relation of the family—yet sometimes accompanied Emmeline to the Opera, and always joined Mrs. Hamilton at home. Many, therefore, were the hours Ellen spent entirely alone, but she persevered unrepiningly in the course laid down for her by the first medical man in London, whom her aunt had consulted.

How she employed those lonely hours Mrs. Hamilton never would inquire. Perfect liberty to follow her own inclinations she should enjoy at least; but it was not without pain that Mrs. Hamilton so frequently left her niece. She knew that the greatest privation, far more than any of the pleasures her cousins enjoyed, was the loss of her society. The mornings and evenings were now so much occupied, that it often happened that the Sabbath and the evening previous were the only times Ellen could have intercourse of any duration with her. She regretted this deeply, for Ellen was no longer a child; she was at that age when life is in general keenly susceptible to the pleasures of society; and reserved as was her disposition, Mrs. Hamilton felt assured, the loss of that unchecked domestic intercourse she had so long enjoyed at Oakwood was pain, though never once was she heard to complain. These contrary duties frequently grieved the heart of her aunt. Often she accompanied Caroline when her inclination prompted her to remain at home; for she loved Ellen as her own child, and to tend and soothe her would sometimes have been the preferable duty; but she checked the wish, for suffering and solitary as was Ellen, Caroline, in the dangerous labyrinth of the world, required her care still more.

There are trials which the world regards not—trials on which there are many who look lightly—these productive of no interest, seldom of sympathy, but with pain to the sufferer; it is when health fails, not sufficiently to attract notice, but when the disordered state of the nerves renders the mind irritable, the body weak; when, from that invisible weakness, little evils become great, the temper loses its equanimity, the spirits their elasticity, we scarcely know wherefore, and we reproach ourselves, and add to our uneasiness by thinking we are becoming pettish and ill-tempered, enervated and repining; we dare not confess such feelings, for our looks proclaim not failing

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health, and who would believe us? when the very struggle for cheerfulness fills the eye with tears, the heart with heaviness, and we feel provoked at our peevishness, and angry that we are so different now to what we have been; and we fancy, changed as we are, all we love can no longer regard us as formerly. Such are among the trials of woman, unknown, frequently unsuspected, by her nearest and dearest relations; and bitter indeed is it when such trials befall us in early youth, when liveliness and buoyancy are expected, and any departure therefrom is imagined to proceed from causes very opposite to the truth. Such at present were the trials of the orphan; but they were softened by the kindness and sympathy of her aunt, who possessed the happy art of soothing more effectually in a few words than others of a less kindly mould could ever have accomplished.

It is in the quick perception of character, in the adaptation of our words to those whom we address, that in domestic circles renders us beloved, and forms the fascination of society. Sympathy is the charm of human life, and when once that is made apparent, we are not slow in discovering or imagining others. Some people find the encouragement of sympathy disagreeable, for they say it makes them miserable for no purpose. What care they for the woes and joys of their acquaintances? Often a tax, and never a pleasure. Minds of such nature know not that there is a "joy in the midst of grief;" but Mrs. Hamilton did, and she encouraged every kindly feeling of her nature. Previous to her marriage, she had been perhaps too reserved and shrinking within herself, fancied there was no one of her own rank at least who could understand her, and therefore none with whom she could sympathize. But the greater confidence of maturer years, the example of her husband, the emotions of a wife and mother, had enlarged her heart, and caused her, by ready sympathy with others, to increase her own enjoyments, and render herself more pleasing than perhaps, if she had remained single, she ever would have been. It was this invisible charm that caused her to be admired and involuntarily loved, even by those who, considering her a saint at first, shrunk in dread from her society; and it was this that rendered the frequent trials of her niece less difficult to bear.

"Does my Ellen remember a little conversation we had on the eve of her last birthday?" demanded Mrs. Hamilton of her niece one evening, as she had finished dressing, to attend her daughter to the Opera, and Martyn, at her desire, had obeyed

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Caroline's impatient summons, and left to Ellen the task of fastening her lady's jewels.

Whenever nothing occurred to prevent it, Ellen was generally with her aunt at dressing-time, and the little conversation that passed between them at such periods frequently rendered Ellen's solitary evening cheerful, when otherwise it might have been, from her state of health and apparently endless task, even gloomy. Mrs. Hamilton had observed a more than usual depression that evening in the manners of her niece, and without noticing, she endeavored to remove it. Ellen was bending down to clasp a bracelet as she spoke, and surprised at the question, looked up, without giving herself time to conceal an involuntary tear, though she endeavored to remove any such impression, by smiling cheerfully, as she replied in the affirmative.

"And will it cheer your solitary evenings, then, my dear Ellen?" she continued, drawing her niece to her, and kissing her transparent brow, "if I say that, in the self-denial, patience, and submission you are now practising, you are doing more towards raising your character in my estimation, and banishing from remembrance the painful past, than you once fancied it would ever be in your power to do. I think I know its motive, and therefore I do not hesitate to bestow the meed of praise you so well deserve."

For a minute Ellen replied not, she only raised her aunt's hand to her lips and kissed it, as if to hide her emotion before she spoke, but her eyes were still swelling with tears as she looked up and replied—

"Indeed, my dearest aunt, I do not deserve it. You do not know how how irritable and ill-tempered I often feel."

"Because you are not very well, my love, and yet you do not feel sufficiently ill to complain. I sometimes fancy such a state of health as yours is more difficult to bear than a severe though short illness, then, you can, at least, claim soothing consolation and sympathy. Now my poor Ellen thinks she can demand neither," she added, smiling.

"I always receive both from you," replied Ellen, earnestly; "and not much submission is required when that is the case, and I am told my health forbids my sharing in Emmeline's pleasures."

"No, love, there would not be, if you felt so ill as to have no desire for them; but that is not the case, for I know you very often feel quite well enough to go out with me, and I am

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quite sure that my Ellen sometimes wishes she were not so completely prohibited such amusements."

"I thought I had succeeded better in concealing those wishes," replied Ellen, blushing deeply.

"So you have, my dear girl, no one but myself suspects them; and you could not expect to conceal them from me, Ellen, could you, when Emmeline says it is utterly impossible to hide her most secret thought from my mystic wand? Do not attempt more, my love; persevere in your present conduct, and I shall be quite satisfied. Have you an interesting book for to-night, or is there any other employment you prefer?"

"You have banished all thoughts of gloom, my dear aunt, and perhaps instead of reading, I shall work and think on what you have said," exclaimed Ellen, her cheek becoming more crimsoned than it was before, and exciting for the moment the attention of her aunt. She however, soon permitted it to pass from her thoughts, for she knew the least emotion generally had that effect. Little did she imagine how those solitary hours were employed. Little did she think the cause of that deep blush, or guess the extent of comfort her words had bestowed on her niece, how they cheered the painful task the orphan believed it her duty to perform. Spite of many obstacles of failing health, she perseveringly continued, although as yet she approached not the end of her desires. No gleam of light yet appeared to say her toil was nearly over, her wish obtained.

The limits of our tale, as well as the many histories of individuals these memoirs of the Hamilton family must embrace, will not permit us to linger on the scenes of gayety in which Caroline now mingled, and which afforded her, perhaps, too many opportunities for the prosecution of her schemes; Miss Grahame's task was no longer difficult. Her confidence once given to another, she could not recall to bestow it upon her mother, from whom, the more she mingled in society, the more she became estranged; and Annie became at once her confidant and adviser. Eager to prove she was not the simple-minded being she was believed, Caroline confided her designs, with regard to St. Eval, to Miss Grahame, who, as may be supposed, heightened and encouraged them. Had any one pointed out to Caroline she was acting with duplicity, departing from the line of truth to which, even in her childhood, in the midst of many other faults, she had beautifully and strictly adhered, she might have shrunk back in horror; but where

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was the harm of a little innocent flirtation? Annie would repeatedly urge, if she fancied a doubt of the propriety of such conduct was rising in her friend's mind, and she was ready with examples of girls of high birth and exemplary virtues who practised it with impunity: it gave a finish to the character of a woman, proved she would sometimes act for herself, not always be in leading-strings; it gave a taste of power, gratified her ambition; in short, flirtation was the very acme of enjoyment, and gave a decided *ton* before and after marriage.

St. Eval was not sanguine. But it was in vain he tried to resist the fascinations of the girl he loved, he could not for an instant doubt but that she encouraged him; he even felt grateful and loved her more for those little arts and kindnesses with which she ever endeavored to draw him from his reserve, and chain him to her side. Could that noble spirit imagine she only acted thus to afford herself amusement for the time, and prove her power to her companions? Could she, the child of Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, act otherwise than honourably? We may pardon Lord St. Eval for believing it impossible, but bitterly was he deceived. Even her mother, her penetrating confiding mother, was deceived, and no marvel then that such should be the case with a comparative stranger.

Had Caroline's manner been more generally coquettish, Mrs. Hamilton's eyes might have been opened; but her behavior in general was such as rather to diminish than increase those fears which, before her child had joined the world, had very frequently occupied her anxious heart. To strangers even, her encouragement of St. Eval might not have been observable, though it was clearly so to the watchful eyes of her parents, whose confidence in their daughter's integrity was such as entirely to exonerate her in their minds from any intention of coquetry. In this instance, perhaps, their regard for the young Earl himself, and their mutual but secret wishes might have heightened their belief, that not only was St. Eval attracted but that Caroline encouraged him, and feeling this, they regretted that Lord Alphingham should continue his attentions, which Caroline never appeared to receive with any particular pleasure.

Anxious as had been Mrs. Hamilton's feelings with regard to the friendship subsisting between her daughter and Annie Grahame, she little imagined how painfully the influence of the latter had already tarnished the character of the former. Few are aware of the danger arising from those very intimate

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connections which young women are so fond of forming. Every mother should study, almost as carefully as those of her own, the character of her children's intimate friends. Mrs. Hamilton had done so, and as we know, never approved of Caroline's intimacy with Annie, but yet she could not check their intercourse while such intimate friendship existed between her husband and Montrose Grahame. She knew, too, that the latter felt pleasure in beholding Caroline the chosen friend of his daughter; and though she could never hope as Grahame did, that the influence of her child would improve the character of his, she had yet sufficient confidence in Caroline at one time to believe that she would still consider her mother her dearest and truest friend, and thus counteract the effects of Annie's ill-directed eloquence. In this hope she had already found herself disappointed; but still, though Caroline refused her sympathy, and bestowed it, as so many other girls did, on a companion of her own age, she relied perhaps too fondly on those principles she had so carefully instilled in early life, and believed that no stain would sully the career of her much-loved child. If Mrs. Hamilton's affection in this instance completely blinded her, if she acted too weakly in not at once breaking this closely-woven chain of intimacy, her feelings, when she knew all, were more than sufficient chastisement. Could the noble, the honorable, the truth-loving mother for one instant imagine that Caroline, the child whose early years had caused her so much pain, had called forth so many tearful prayers—the child whose dawning youth had been so fair, that her heart had nearly lost its tremblings—that her Caroline should encourage one young man merely to indulge in love of power, and, what was even worse, to thus conceal her regard for another? Yet it was even so. Caroline really believed that not only was she an object of passionate love to the Viscount, but that she returned the sentiment with equal if not heightened warmth, and, as the undeniable token of true love, she never mentioned his name except to her confidant. In the first of these conjectures she was undoubtedly right; as sincerely as a man of his character could, Lord Alphingham did love Miss Hamilton, and the fascination of his manner, his insinuating eloquence, and ever ready flattery, all combined, might well cause this novice in such matters to believe her heart was really touched; but that it truly was so not only may we be allowed to doubt, but it appeared that Annie did so also, by her laborious efforts to fan the newly ignited spark

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into a flame, and never once permit Caroline to look into herself; and she took so many opportunities of speaking of those silly, weak-spirited girls, that went with a tale of love directly to their mothers, and thus very frequently blighted their hopes and condemned them to broken hearts, by their duennas' caprices, that Caroline shrunk from the faintest wish to confide all to her mother, with a sensation amounting almost to fear and horror. Eminently handsome and accomplished as Lord Alphingham was, still there was somewhat in his features, or rather their expression, that did not please, and scarcely satisfied Mrs. Hamilton's penetration. Intimate as he was with Grahame, friendly as he had become with her husband, she could not overcome the feeling of repugnance with which she more than once found herself unconsciously regarding him; and she felt pleased that Mr. Hamilton steadily adhered to his resolution in not inviting him to his house. To have described what she disliked in him would have been impossible, it was indefinable; but there was a casual glance of that dark eye, a curl of that handsome mouth, a momentary knitting of the brow, that whispered of a mind not inwardly at peace; that restless passions had found their dwelling-place around his heart. Mrs. Hamilton only saw him in society: it was uncharitable perhaps to judge him thus; but the feelings of a mother had rendered her thus acute, had endowed her with a penetration unusually perceptive, and she rejoiced that Caroline gave him only the meed of politeness, and that no sign of encouragement was displayed in her manner towards him.

That mother's fears were not unfounded. Lord Alphingham loved Caroline, but the love of a libertine is not true affection, and such a character for the last fourteen years of his life he had been; nine years of that time he had lived on the Continent, gay, and courted, in whatever country he resided, winning many a youthful heart to bid it break, or lure it on to ruin. It was only the last year he had returned to England, and as he had generally assumed different names in the various parts of the Continent he had visited, the adventures of his life were unknown in the land of his birth, save that they were sometimes whispered by a few in similar coteries, and then more as conjecture than reality. So long a time had elapsed, that the wild errors of his youth, which had been perhaps the original cause of his leaving England, were entirely forgotten, as if such things had never been, and the Viscount now found

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himself quite as much, if not more, an object of universal attraction in his native land, than he had been on the Continent. He was now about thirty, and perfect indeed in his vocation. The freshness, *naivete*, and perfect innocence of Caroline had captivated his fancy perhaps even more than it had ever been before, and her perfect ignorance of the ways of the fashionable world encouraged him to hope his conquest of her heart would be very easy. He had found an able confidant and advocate in Miss Grahame, who had contrived to place herself with her father's friend on the footing of most friendly intimacy, and partly by her advice and the suggestions of his own heart he determined to win the regard of Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, before he openly paid attentions to their daughter. With the former he appeared very likely to succeed, for the talent he displayed in the House, his apparently earnest zeal for the welfare of his country, her church and state, his masterly eloquence, and the interest he felt for Grahame, were all qualities attractive in the eyes of Mr. Hamilton; and though he did not yet invite him to his house, he never met him without evincing pleasure. With Mrs. Hamilton, Alphingham did not find himself so much at ease, nor fancy he was so secure; courteous she was indeed, but in her intercourse with him she had unconsciously recalled much of what Grahame termed the forbidden reserve of years past. In vain he attempted with her to pass the barriers of universal politeness, and become intimate; his every advance was repelled coldly, yet not so devoid of courtesy as to make him suspect she had penetrated his secret character. Still he persevered in unwavering and marked politeness, although Annie's representations of Mrs. Hamilton's character had already caused him to determine in his own mind to make Caroline his wife, with or without her mother's approval; and he amused himself with believing that, as her mother was so strict and stern as to keep her children, particularly Caroline, in such subjection, it would be doing the poor girl a charity to release her from such thraldom. and introduce her, as his wife, into scenes far more congenial to her taste, where she would be free from such keen *surveillance*. In these thoughts he was ably seconded by Annie, who was constantly pitying Caroline's enslaved situation, and condemning Mrs. Hamilton's strict severity, declaring it was all affectation; she was not a degree better than any one else, who did not make half the fuss about it. Lord Alphingham's resolution was taken, that before the present season was over, Caroline should be engaged to him,

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nolens volens on the part of her parents, and he acted accordingly.

As opposite as were the characters, so was the conduct of Caroline's two noble suitors. St. Eval, in spite of the encouragement he received, yet shrank from paying any marked attention either to Caroline or her parents. It was by degrees he became intimate in their family, but there, perhaps, the only person with whom he felt entirely at ease was Emmeline, who, rejoicing at Caroline's change of manner, began to hope her feelings were changing too, and indulged in hopes that one day Lord St. Eval might really be her brother. Emmeline knew her sister's opinion of coquetry was very different to hers; but this simple-minded girl could never have conceived that scheme of duplicity, which, by the aid and counsel of Annie, Caroline now practised. She scarcely ever saw Alphingham, and never hearing her sister name him, and being perfectly unconscious of his attentions when they met, she could not, even in her unusually acute imagination, believe him St. Eval's rival. More and more enamored the young Earl became each time he felt himself an especial object of Caroline's notice; his heart throbbed and his hopes grew stronger, still he breathed not one word of love, he dared not. Diffident of his own attractive qualities, he feared to speak, till he thought he could be assured of her affections. In the intoxication of love, he felt her refusal would have more effect upon him than he could bear. He shrunk from the remarks of the world, and waited yet a little longer, ere with a trembling heart he should ask that all-important question. So matters stood in Mr. Hamilton's family during the greater part of the London season; but as it is not our task to enter into Caroline's gayeties, we here may be permitted to mention Mrs. Greville's departure with her delicate and suffering child from the land of their birth.

Mr. Greville had made no opposition to their intended plan. Seriously Mr. Maitland had told him that the life of his child depended on her residence for some time abroad, in a genial climate and extreme quiet; but in vain did Mrs. Greville endeavor to believe that affection for his daughter and herself occasioned this unwonted acquiescence; it was too clearly to be perceived that he was pleased at their separation from himself, for it gave him more liberty. She wrote to her son, imploring him in the most earnest and affectionate manner to return home for the Easter vacation, that she might see him for a few days before she left England—perhaps never to

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return. Ruined from earliest boyhood by weak indulgence, Alfred Greville felt sometimes a throb of natural feeling for his mother, though her counsels were of no avail. Touched by the mournful solemnity and deep affection breathing in every line, he complied with her request, and spent four or five days peacefully at home. He appeared shocked at the alteration he found in his sister, and was kinder than he had previously been in his manner towards her. He had lately become heir to a fortune and estate, left him by a very old and distant relative of his father, and it was from this he had determined, he told his father, to go to Cambridge and cut a dash there with the best of them. He was now eighteen, and believed himself no inconsiderable personage, in which belief he was warmly encouraged by his mistaken father. It was strange that, with such an income, he permitted the favorite residence of his mother and sister to be sold—but so it was. The generous feelings of his early childhood had been completely blunted, and to himself alone he intended to appropriate that fortune, when a portion would yet have removed many of Mrs. Greville's anxious fears for the future. Alfred intended, when he was of age, to be one of the first men of fashion; but he did not consider, that if he "cut a dash" at college, with the *éclat* he wished, that before three years had passed, he would not be much richer than he had been when the fortune was first left him.

"Mother, you will drive me from you," he one day exclaimed, in passion, as she endeavored to detain him. "If you wish ever to see me, let me take my own way. Advice I will not brook, and reproach I will not bear; if you love me, be silent, for I will not be governed."

"Alfred, I will speak!" replied his almost agonized parent, urged on by an irresistible impulse. "Child of my love, my prayers! Alfred, I will not see you go wrong, without one effort, one struggle to guide you in the right path. Alfred, I leave England—my heart is bursting; for Mary's sake alone I live, and if she be taken from me, Alfred, we shall never meet again. My son, my son, oh, if you ever loved me, listen to me now, they may be the last words you will ever hear from your mother's lips. I implore, I beseech you to turn from your evil courses, Alfred!" and she suddenly sunk at his feet, the mother before the son. So devoted, so fervid was the love with which she regarded him, that had she been told, that to lure him to virtue her own life must be the forfeit, willingly at

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that moment would she have died. She continued with an eloquence of such beseeching tenderness, it would have seemed none could have heard it unmoved. "Alfred, your mother kneels to you, your own mother. Oh, hear her; do not condemn her to wretchedness. Let me not suffer more. You have sought temptation; oh, fly from it; seek the companionship of those who will lead you to honor, not to vice. Break from those connections you have weaved around you. Turn again to the God you have deserted. Oh, do not live as you have done; think on the responsibility each year increases. My child, my beloved, in mercy refuse not your mother's prayer! reject not my advice, Alfred! Alfred!" and she clung to him, while her voice became hoarse with intense anguish. "Oh, promise me to turn from your present life. Promise me to think on my words, to seek the footstool of mercy, and return again to Him who has not forsaken you. Promise me to live a better life; say you will be your mother's comfort, not her misery—her blessing, not her curse. My child, my child, be merciful!" Longer, more imploring still would she have pleaded, but voice failed, and it was only on those chiselled features the agony of the soul could have been discovered Alfred gazed on her thus kneeling at his feet—his mother, she who in his infancy had knelt beside him, to guide on high his childish prayers. The heart of the misguided boy was softened, tears filled his eyes. He would have spoken, he would have pledged himself to do all that she had asked, when suddenly the ridicule of his companions flashed before his fancy. Could he bear that? No; he could see his mother at his feet, but he could not meet the ridicule of the world. He raised her hastily, but in perfect silence; pressed her to his heart, kissed her cheek repeatedly, then placed her on a couch, and darted from her presence. He had said no word, he had given no sign; and for several hours that mother could not overcome internal wretchedness so far even as to join her Mary. He returned to Cambridge. They parted in affection; seldom had the reckless boy evinced so much emotion as he did when he bade farewell to his mother and sister. He folded Mary to his bosom, and implored her, in a voice almost inaudible, to take care of her own health for the sake of their mother; but when she entreated him to come and see them in their new abode as soon as he could, he answered not. Yet that emotion had left a balm on the torn heart of his mother. She fancied her son, wayward as he was, yet loved her; and though she dared

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not look forward to his reformation, still, to feel he loved her—oh, if fresh zeal were required in her prayers, that knowledge gave it.

The first week in May they left Greville Manor. Still weak and suffering, the struggle to conceal and subdue all she felt at leaving, as she thought for ever, the house of her infancy, of her girlhood, her youth, was almost too much for poor Mary; and her mother more than once believed she would not reach in life the land they were about to seek. The sea breezes, for they travelled whenever they could along the shore, in a degree nerved her; and by the time they reached Dover, ten days after they had left the Manor, she had rallied sufficiently to ease the sorrowing heart of her mother of a portion of its burden.

They arrived at Dover late in the evening, and early the following day, as Mary sat by the large window of the hotel, watching with some appearance of interest the bustling scene before her, a travelling carriage passed rapidly by and stopped at the entrance. She knew the livery, and her heart throbbed almost to suffocation, as it whispered that Mr. Hamilton would not come alone.

"Mother, Mr. Hamilton has arrived," she succeeded at length in saying. "And Emmeline—is it, can it be?" But she had no more time to wonder, for ere she had recovered the agitation the sight of one other of Mr. Hamilton's family had occasioned, they were in the room, and Emmeline springing forward, had flung herself on Mary's neck; and utterly unable to control her feelings at the change she beheld in her friend, wept passionately on her shoulder. Powerfully agitated, Mary felt her strength was failing, and had it not been for Mr. Hamilton's support, she would have fallen to the ground. He supported her with a father's tenderness to the couch, and reproachfully demanded of Emmeline if she had entirely forgotten her promise of composure.

"Do not reprove her, my dear friend," said Mrs. Greville, as she drew the weeping girl affectionately to her. "My poor Mary is so quickly agitated now, that the pleasure of seeing three instead of one of our dear-valued friends has been sufficient of itself to produce this agitation. And you too, Herbert," she continued, extending her hand to the young man, who hastily raised it to his lips, as if to conceal an emotion which had paled his cheek, almost as a kindred feeling had done with Mary's. "Have you deserted your favorite pur-

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suits, and left Oxford at such a busy time, merely to see us before we leave? This is kind, indeed."

"I left Percy to work for me," answered Herbert, endeavoring to hide emotion under the veil of gayety. "As to permit you to leave England without once more seeing you, and having one more smile from Mary, I would not, even had the whole honor of my college been at stake. You must not imagine me so entirely devoted to my books, dear Mrs. Greville, as to believe I possess neither time nor inclination for the gentler feelings of human nature."

"I know you too well, and have known you too long to imagine that," replied Mrs. Greville, earnestly. "And is Mary so completely to engross your attention, Emmeline," she added, turning towards the couch where the friends sat, "that I am not to hear a word of your dear mother, Caroline, or Ellen? Indeed, I cannot allow that."

The remark quickly produced a general conversation, and Herbert for the first time addressed Mary. A strange, unconquerable emotion had chained his tongue as he beheld her; but now, with eager yet respectful tenderness, he inquired after her health, and how she had borne their long journey; and other questions, trifling in themselves, but uttered in a tone that thrilled the young heart of her he addressed.

Herbert knew not how intimately the image of Mary Greville had mingled with his most secret thoughts, even in his moments of grave study and earnest application, until he heard she was about to leave England. Sorrow, disappointment, scarcely defined but bitterly painful, then occupied his mind, and the knowledge burst with dazzling clearness on his heart that he loved her; so deeply, so devotedly, that even were every other wish fulfilled, life, without her, would be a blank. He had deemed himself so lifted above all earthly feelings, that even were he to be deprived as Mr. Morton of every natural relation, he could in time reconcile himself to the will of his Maker, and in the discharge of ministerial duties be happy. He had fancied his heart was full of the love of God alone, blessed in that, however changed his earthly lot. Suddenly he was awakened from his illusion: now in the hour of separation he knew an earthly idol; he discovered that he was not so completely the servant of his Maker as he had hoped, and sometimes believed. But in the doubts and fears which shadowed his exalted mind, he sought the footstool of his God. His cry for assistance was not unheeded. Peace and comfort

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rested on his heart. A cloud was lifted from his eyes, and for the knowledge of his virtuous love he blessed his God; feeling thus supported, he could guide and control himself according to the dictates of piety. He knew well the character of Mary; he felt assured that, if in after years he were permitted to make her his own, she would indeed become his helpmate in all things, more particularly in those which related to his God and to his holy duties among men. He thought on the sympathy that existed between them—he remembered the lighting up of that soft, dark eye, the flushing cheek, the smile of pleasure that ever welcomed him, and fondly his heart whispered that he need not doubt her love. Three years, or nearly four must elapse ere he could feel at liberty to marry; not till he beheld himself a minister of God. Yet interminable as to his imagination the intervening years appeared, still there was no trembling in his trusting heart. If his Father on high ordained them for each other, it mattered not how long the time that must elapse, and if for some wise purpose his wishes were delayed, he recognized the hand of God, and saw "that it was good."

Yet Herbert could not resist the impulse to behold Mary once more ere she quitted England, to explain to her his feelings; to understand each other. He knew the day his father intended going to Dover, and the evening previous, much to the astonishment of the family, made his appearance amongst them. All expressed pleasure at his intention but one, and that one understood not why; but when she heard the cause of his unexpected visit, a sudden and indefinable pang shot through her young heart, dimming at once the joy with which the sight of him had filled it. She knew not, guessed not why, when she laid her head on her pillow that night, she wept so bitterly. The source of those secret and silent tears she could not trace, she only knew their cause was one of sorrow, and yet she loved Mary.

The pleading earnestness of Emmeline had, after some little difficulty, obtained the consent of her mother to her accompanying her father and brother, on condition, however, of her not agitating Mary by any unconstrained display of sorrow. It was only at their first meeting this condition had been forgotten. Mary looked so pale, so thin, so different even to when they parted, that the warm heart of Emmeline could not be restrained, for she knew, however resignation might be, nay, was felt, it was a bitter pang to that gentle girl to leave her native

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land, and the friends she so much loved; but recalling her promise, with a strong effort she checked her own sorrow, and endeavored with playful fondness to raise the spirits of her friend.

The day passed cheerfully; the young people took a drive for some few miles in the vicinity of Dover, while Mr. Hamilton, acting the part of a brother to the favorite *protégé* of his much-loved mother, listened to her plans, counselled and improved them, and indeed, on many points proved himself such a true friend, that when Mrs. Greville retired to rest that night she felt more at ease in mind than for many months she had been.

The following day was employed in seeing all the antiquities of Dover, its ancient castle among the first, and with Mr. Hamilton as a cicerone it was a day of pleasure to all, though, perhaps, a degree of melancholy might have pervaded the party in the evening, for the recollection would come, that by noon on the morrow Mrs. Greville and Mary would bid them farewell. In vain during that day had Herbert sought for an opportunity to speak with Mary on the subject nearest his heart, though they had been so happy together; when for a few minutes they found themselves alone, he had fancied there was more than usual reserve in Mary's manner, which checked the words upon his lip. Some hours he lay awake that night. Should he write his hopes and wishes? No: he would hear the answer from her own lips, and the next morning an opportunity appeared to present itself.

The vessel did not leave Dover till an hour before noon, and breakfast having been dispatched by half-past nine, Mrs. Greville persuaded her daughter to take a gentle walk in the intervening time. Herbert instantly offered to escort her. Emmeline remained to assist Mrs. Greville in some travelling arrangements, and Mr. Hamilton employed himself in some of those numberless little offices which active men take upon themselves in the business of a departure. Mary shrunk with such evident reluctance from this arrangement, that for the first time Herbert doubted.

"You were not wont to shrink thus from accepting me as your companion," he said, fixing his large expressive eyes mournfully upon her, and speaking in a tone of such melancholy sweetness, that Mary hastily struggled to conceal the tear that started to her eye. "Are our happy days of childhood indeed thus forgotten?" he continued, gently. "Go with me, dear Mary; let us in fancy transport ourselves at least for one

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hour back to those happy years of early life which will not come again."

The thoughts, the hopes, the joys of her childhood flashed with sudden power through the heart of Mary as he spoke, and she resisted them not.

"Forgive me, Herbert," she said, hastily rising to prepare, "I have become a strange and wayward being the last few months; you must bear with me, for the sake of former days."

Playfully he granted the desired forgiveness, and they departed on their walk. For some little time they walked in silence. Before they were aware of it, a gentle ascent conducted them to a spot, not only lovely in its own richness, but in the extensive view that stretched beneath them. The wide ocean lay slumbering at their feet; the brilliant rays of the sun, which it reflected as a mirror, appeared to lull it to rest, the very waves broke softly on the shore. To the left extended the snow-white cliffs, throwing in shadow part of the ocean, and bringing forward their own illumined walls in bold relief against the dark blue sea. Ships of every size, from the floating castle in the offing to the tiny pleasure boat, whose white sails shining in the sun caused her to be distinguished at some distance, skimming along the ocean as a bird of snowy plumage across the heavens, the merchant vessels, the packets entering and departing, even the blackened colliers, added interest to the scene; for at the distance Herbert and Mary stood, no confusion was heard to disturb the moving picture. On their right the beautiful country peculiar to Kent spread out before them in graceful undulations of hill and valley, hop-ground and meadow, wherein the sweet fragrance of the newly-mown grass was wafted at intervals to the spot where they stood. Wild flowers of various kinds were around them; the hawthorn appearing like a tree of snow in the centre of a dark green hedge; the modest primrose and the hidden violet yet lingered, as if loth to depart, though their brethren of the summer had already put forth their budding blossoms. A newly-severed trunk of an aged tree invited them to sit and rest, and the most tasteful art could not have placed a rustic seat in a more lovely scene.

Long and painfully did Mary gaze around her, as if she would engrave within her heart every scene of the land she was so soon to leave.

"Herbert," she said, at length, "I never wished to gaze on futurity before, but now, oh, I would give much to know if indeed I shall ever gaze on these scenes again. Could I but

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think I might return to them, the pang of leaving would lose one-half its bitterness. I know this is a weak and perhaps sinful feeling; but in vain I have lately striven to bow resignedly to my Maker's will, even should His call meet me, as I sometimes fear it will, in a foreign land, apart from all, save one whom I love on earth."

"Do not, do not think so, dearest Mary. True, indeed, there is no parting without its fears, even for a week, a day, an hour. Death ever hovers near us, to descend when least expected. But oh, for my sake, Mary, dear Mary, talk not of dying in a foreign land. God's will is best, His decree is love, I know it, I feel it, and on this subject from our infancy we have felt alike; to you alone have I felt that I dared breathe the holy aspirations sometimes my own. I am not wont to be sanguine, but somewhat whispers within me you will return—these scenes behold again."

Mary gazed on her young companion; he had spoken with unwonted animation, and his mild eyes rested with trusting fondness upon her; she dared not meet it; her pale cheek suddenly became crimson, but with an effort she replied—

"Buoy me not up with vain hopes, Herbert; it is better, perhaps, that I should never look to my return, for hope might descend to vain wishes, and wishes to repinings, which must not be. I shall look on other scenes of loveliness, and though in them perhaps no fond association of earth may be mingled, yet there is one of which no change of country can deprive me, one association that from scenes like these can never, never fly. The friends of my youth will be no longer near me, strangers alone will surround me; but even as the hand of my Heavenly Father is marked in every scene, however far apart, so is that hand, that love extended to me wherever I may dwell. Oh, that my heart may indeed be filled with the love of Him."

There was a brief silence. The countenance of Herbert had been for a moment troubled, but after a few seconds resumed its serenity, heightened by the fervid feelings of his heart.

"Mary," he said, taking her passive hand in his, "if I am too bold in speaking all I wish, forgive me. You know not how I have longed for one moment of unchecked confidence before you left England; it is now before me, and, oh, listen to me, dearest Mary, with that kindness you have ever shown. I need not remind you of our days of childhood and

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early youth; I need not recall the mutual sympathy which, in every feeling, hope, joy, or sorrow, has been our own. We have grown together, played together in infancy; read, thought, and often in secret prayed together in youth. To you I have ever imparted my heartfelt wishes, earnest prayers for my future life, to become a worthy servant of my God, and lead others in his path, and yet, frail mortal as I am, I feel, even if these wishes are fulfilled, there will yet, dearest Mary, remain a void within my heart. May I, may I, indeed, behold in the playmate of my infancy a friend in manhood, the partner of my life—my own Mary as my assistant in labors of love? I am agitating you, dearest girl, forgive me; only give me some little hope. Years must elapse ere that blessed moment can arrive, perhaps I have been wrong to urge it now, but I could not part from you without one word to explain my feelings, to implore your ever-granted sympathy."

The hand of Mary trembled in his grasp. She had turned from his pleading glance, but when he ceased, she raised her head and struggled to speak. A smile, beautiful, holy in its beauty, appeared struggling with tears, and a faint flush had risen to her cheek, but voice she had none, and for one moment she concealed her face on his shoulder. She withdrew not her hand from his, and Herbert felt—oh, how gratefully—that his love was returned; he had not hoped in vain. For some minutes they could not speak, every feeling was in common; together they had grown, together loved, and now that the magic word had been spoken, what need was there for reserve? None; and reserve was banished. No darkening clouds were then perceived; at that moment Mary thought not of her father, and if she did, could she believe that his consent to a union with a son of Mr. Hamilton would be difficult to obtain? Marry they could not yet, and perhaps the unalloyed bliss of that hour might have originated in the fact that they thought only of the present—the blessed knowledge that they loved each other, were mutually beloved.

The happiness glowing on Mary's expressive countenance as she entered could not fail to attract the watchful eye of her mother, and almost unconsciously, and certainly indefinably, her own bosom reflected the pleasure of her child, and the pang of quitting England was partially eased of its bitterness. Yet still it was a sorrowful moment when the time of separation actually came. Their friends had gone on board with them, and remained till the signal for departure was given

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Mary had preferred the cabin to the confusion on deck, and there her friends left her. In the sorrow of that moment Emmeline's promise of composure was again forgotten; she clung weeping to Mary's neck, till her father, with gentle persuasion, drew her away, and almost carried her on deck. Herbert yet lingered; they were alone in the cabin, the confusion attendant on a departure preventing all fear of intruders. He clasped Mary to his heart, in one long passionate embrace, then hastily placing the trembling girl in the arms of her mother, he murmured almost inaudibly—

"Mrs. Greville, dearest Mrs. Greville, guard, oh, guard her for me, she will be mine; she will return to bless me, when I may claim and can cherish her as my wife. Talk to her of me; let not the name of Herbert be prohibited between you. I must not stay, yet one word more, Mrs. Greville—say, oh, say you will not refuse me as your son, if three years hence Mary will still be mine. Say your blessing will hallow our union; and oh, I feel it will then indeed be blessed!"

Overpowered with sudden surprise and unexpected joy, Mrs. Greville gazed for a moment speechlessly on the noble youth before her, and vainly the mother struggled to speak at this confirmation of her long-cherished hope and wishes.

"Mother," murmured Mary, alarmed at her silence, and burying her face in her bosom, "mother, will you not speak, will you not bid us hope?"

"God in Heaven bless you, my children!" she at length exclaimed, bursting into tears of heartfelt gratitude and joy. "It was joy, joy," she repeated, struggling for composure; "I expected not this blessing. Yes, Herbert, we will speak of you, think of you, doubt us not, my son, my dear son. A mother's protecting care and soothing love will guard your Mary. She is not only her mother's treasure now. Go, my beloved Herbert, you are summoned; farewell, and God bless you!"

Herbert did not linger with his father and sister; a few minutes' private interview with the former caused his most sanguine hopes to become yet stronger, then travelling post to London, where he only remained a few hours, returned with all haste to his college. In his rapid journey, however, he had changed his mind with regard to keeping what had passed between himself and Mary a secret from his mother, whom he yet loved with perhaps even more confiding fondness than in his boyhood. He saw her alone; imparted to her briefly but

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earnestly all that had passed, implored her to promise consent, and preserve his confidence even from his brother and sisters; as so long a time must elapse ere they could indeed be united, that he dreaded their engagement being known.

"Even the good wishes of the dear members of home," he said, "would sound, I fear, but harshly on my ear. I cannot define why I do not wish it known even to those I love; yet, dearest mother, indulge me. The events of one day are hidden from us; how dark then must be those of three years. No plighted promise has passed between us; it is but the confidence of mutual love; and that—oh, mother, I could not bear it torn from the recesses of my own breast to be a subject of conversation even to those dearest to me."

His mother looked on the glowing countenance of her son; on him, who from his birth had never by his conduct given her one single moment of care, and had she even disapproved of his secrecy, all he asked would have been granted him; but she approved of his resolution, and emotion glistened in her eye, as she said—

"My Herbert, if I had been privileged to select one among my young friends to be your wife, my choice would have fallen, without one moment's hesitation, on Mary Greville. She, amid them all, I deem most worthy to be the partner of my son. May Heaven in mercy spare you to each other!"

Herbert returned to college, and resumed his studies with even greater earnestness than before. His unrestrained confidence had been as balm to his mother's heart, and soothed the bitter pain it was to behold, to feel assured, for it was no longer fancy, that the confidence of Caroline was indeed utterly denied her and bestowed upon another. Yet still Mrs. Hamilton fancied Caroline loved St. Eval; her eyes had not yet been opened to the enormity of her daughter's conduct. Nor were they till, after a long struggle of fervid love with the tremblings natural to a fond but reserved and lowly heart, St. Eval summoned courage to offer hand, heart, and fortune to the girl he loved (he might well be pardoned for the belief that she loved him), and was rejected, coldly, decidedly.

The young Earl had received the glad sanction of Mr. Hamilton to make his proposals to his daughter. There had never been, nor was there now, any thing to damp his hopes. He was not, could not be deceived in the belief that Caroline accepted, nay, demanded, encouraged his attention. Invariably kind, almost fascinating in her manner, she had ever singled

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him out from the midst of many much gayer and more attractive young men. She had given him somewhat more to love each time they parted; and what could this mean, but that she cared for him more than for others? Again and again St. Eval pondered on the encouragement he could not doubt but that he received; again and again demanded of himself if he were not playing with her feelings thus to defer his proposals. Surely she loved him. The sanction of her parents had heightened his hopes, and love and confidence in the truth, the purity of his beloved one obtained so much ascendency over his heart, that when the important words were said, he had almost ceased to fear. How bitter, how agonizing then must have been his disappointment when he was refused—when sudden haughtiness beamed on Caroline's noble brow, and coldness spread over every feature. And yet, could he doubt it? No; triumph was glittering in her sparkling eye; in vain he looked for sympathy in his disappointment, if love were denied him. He gazed on her, and the truth suddenly flashed on his mind; he marked the triumph with which she heard his offer; no softening emotion was in her countenance. In vain he tried to ascribe its expression to some other feeling; it was triumph, he could not be deceived; and with agony St. Eval discovered that the being he had almost worshipped was not the faultless creature he had believed her; she had played with his feelings; she had encouraged him, heightened his love, merely to afford herself amusement. The visions of hope, of fancy were rudely dispelled, and perhaps at that moment it was better for his peace that he suddenly felt she was beneath his love; she was not worthy to be his wife. He no longer esteemed; and if love itself were not utterly snapped asunder, the loss of esteem enabled him to act in that interview with pride approaching to her own. He reproached her not: no word did he utter that could prove how deeply he was wounded, and thus add to the triumph so plain to be perceived. That she had sunk in his estimation she might have seen, but other feelings prevented her discovering how deeply. Had she veiled her manner more, had she rejected him with kindness, St. Eval might still have loved, and imagined that friendship and esteem had actuated her conduct towards him. Yet those haughty features expelled this thought as soon as it arose. It was on the night of a gay assembly St. Eval had found an opportunity to speak with Caroline, and when both rejoined the gay crowd no emotion was discernible in the countenance of

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either. St. Eval was the same to all as usual. No one who might have heard his eloquent discussion on some state affairs with the Russian consul could have imagined how painfully acute were his sufferings; it was not only disappointed love—no, his was aggravated bitterness; he could no longer esteem the object of his love, he had found himself deceived, cruelly deceived, in one he had looked on almost as faultless; and where is the pang that can equal one like this? The heightened color on Caroline's cheek, the increased brilliancy of her eye, attracted the admiration of all around her, the triumph of power had indeed been achieved. But when she laid her head on her pillow, when the silence and darkness of night brought the past to her mind more vividly, in vain she sought forgetfulness in sleep. Was it happiness, triumph, that bade her bury her face in her hands and weep, weep till almost every limb became convulsed by her overpowering emotion? Her thoughts were undefined, but so painful, that she was glad—how glad, when morning came. She compared her present with her former self, and the contrast was misery; but even as her ill-fated aunt had done, she summoned pride to stifle every feeling of remorse.

Mr. Hamilton had given his sanction to the addresses of Lord St. Eval to his daughter; but he knew not when the young man intended to place the seal upon his fate. Great then was his astonishment, the morning following the evening we have mentioned, when St. Eval called to bid him farewell, as he intended, he said, leaving London that afternoon for his father's seat, where he should remain perhaps a week, and then quit England for the Continent. He spoke calmly, but there was a paleness of the cheek, a dimness of the eye, that told a tale of inward wretchedness, which the regard of Mr. Hamilton could not fail instantly to discover. Deeply had he become interested in the young man, and the quick instinct combined with the fears of a father told him that the conduct of Caroline had caused this change. He looked at the expressive countenance of the young Earl for a few minutes, then placing his hand on his shoulder, said kindly, but impressively—

"St. Eval, you are changed, as well as your plans. You are unhappy. What has happened? Have your too sensitive feelings caused you to fancy Caroline unkind?"

"Would to heaven it were only fancy!" replied St. Eval, with unwonted emotion, and almost convulsively clenching both hands as if for calmness, added more composedly, "I have

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been too presumptuous in my hopes; I fancied myself beloved by your beautiful daughter, but I have found myself painfully mistaken."

Sternness gathered on the brow of the father as he heard, and he answered, with painful emphasis—

"St. Eval, deceive me not, I charge you. In what position do you now stand with Caroline?"

"Briefly, then, if I must speak, in the humble character of a rejected, scornfully rejected lover." His feelings carried him beyond control. The triumph he had seen glittering so brightly in the eyes of Caroline had for the time turned every emotion into gall. He shrunk from the agony it was to find he was deceived in one whom he had believed so perfect.

"Scorn! has a daughter of mine acted thus? Encourage, and then scorn. St. Eval, for pity's sake, tell me! you are jesting; it is not of Caroline you speak?" So spoke the now agonized father, for every hope of his child's singleness of mind and purity of intention appeared at once blighted. He grasped St. Eval's hand, and looked on him with eyes from which, in the deep disappointment of his heart, all sternness had fled.

"I grieve to cause you pain, my dear friend," replied the young Earl, entering at once into the father's feelings, "but it is even so. Your daughter has only acted as many, nay, as the majority of her sex are fond of doing. It appears that you, too, have marked what might be termed the encouragement she gave me. My self-love is soothed, for I might otherwise have deemed my hopes were built on the unstable foundation of folly and presumption."

"And condemnation of my child is the fruit of your self-acquittal, St. Eval, is it not? You despise her now as much as you have loved her," and Mr. Hamilton paced the room with agitation.

"Would almost that I could!" exclaimed St. Eval; the young Earl then added, despondingly, "no, I deny not that your child has sunk in my estimation; I believed her exalted far above the majority of her sex; that she, apparently all softness and truth, was incapable of playing with the most sacred feelings of a fellow-creature. I looked on her as faultless; and though the veil has fallen from my eyes, it tells me that if in Caroline Hamilton I am deceived, it is useless to look for perfection upon earth. Yet I cannot tear her image from my heart. She has planted misery there which I cannot at present overcome; but if that triumph yields her pleasure, and tends

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to her happiness, be it so; my farther attention shall no longer annoy her."

Much disturbed, Mr. Hamilton continued to pace the room, then hastily approaching the young Earl, he said, hurriedly—

"Forget her, St. Eval, forget her; rest not till you have regained your peace. My disappointment, that of her mother —our long-cherished hopes, but it is useless to speak of them, to bring them forward, bitter as they are, in comparison with yours. Forget her, St. Eval; she is unworthy of you," and he wrung his hand again and again, as if in that pressure he could conquer and conceal his feelings. At that instant Emmeline bounded joyfully into the room, unconscious that any one was with her father, and only longed to tell him the delightful news, that she had received a long, long letter from Mary, telling her of their safe arrival at Geneva, at which place Mrs. Greville intended to remain for a few weeks, before she proceeded more southward.

"Look, dear papa, is not this worth receiving?" she exclaimed, holding up the well-filled letter, and looking the personification of innocent and radiant happiness, her fair luxuriant hair pushed in disorder from her open forehead and flushed cheek, her blue eyes sparkling with irresistible glee, which was greatly heightened by her glowing smiles. It was impossible to look on Emmeline without feeling every ruffled emotion suddenly calmed; she was so bright, so innocent, so fair a thing, that if peace and kindness had wished to take up their abode on earth, they could not have found a fairer form wherein to dwell. As St. Eval gazed upon the animated girl, he could not help contrasting her innocent and light-hearted pleasure with his own unmitigated sorrow.

"Your presence and your joy are mistimed, my dear Emmeline; your father appears engaged," said Mrs. Hamilton, entering almost directly after her child, and perceiving by one glance at her husband's face that something had chanced to disturb him. "Control these wild spirits for a time till he is able to listen to you."

"Do not check her, my dear Emmeline, I am not particularly engaged. If St. Eval will forgive me, I would gladly hear some news of our dear Mary."

"And pray let me hear it also. You know how interested I am in this dear friend of yours, Emmeline," replied St. Eval, struggling with himself, and succeeding sufficiently to speak playfully; for he and Emmeline had contrived to become such

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great allies and intimate friends, that by some sympathy titles of ceremony were seldom used between them, and they were Eugene and Emmeline to each other, as if they were indeed brother and sister.

Laughingly and delightedly Emmeline imparted the contents of her letter, which afforded real pleasure both to Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, by the more cheerful, even happier style in which she had written.

"Now do you not think I ought to be proud of my friend, Master Eugene? is she not one worth having?" demanded Emmeline, sportively appealing to the young Earl, as she read to her father some of Mary's affectionate expressions and wishes in the conclusion.

"So much so, that I am seized with an uncontrollable desire to know her, and if you will only give me a letter of introduction, I will set off for Geneva next week."

Emmeline raised her laughing eyes to his face, with an expression of unfeigned amazement.

"A most probable circumstance," she said, laughing; "no, Lord St. Eval, you will not impose thus on my credulity. Eugene St. Eval, the most courted, flattered, and distinguished, leave London before the season is over—impossible."

"I thank you for the pretty compliments you are showering on me, my little fairy friend, but it is nevertheless true. I leave England for the Continent next week, and I may as well bend my wandering steps to Geneva as elsewhere."

"But what can you possibly be going on the Continent again for? I am sure, by all the anecdotes you have told me, you must have seen all that is worth seeing, and so why should poor England again be deserted by one of the ablest of her sons?"

"Emmeline!" exclaimed her mother, in an accent of warning and reproach, which brought a deep crimson flush to her cheek, and caused her eyes to glisten, for Mrs. Hamilton had marked that all was not serene on the countenance of the Earl, and her heart beat with anxious alarm; for she knew his intentions with regard to Caroline, and all she beheld and heard, startled, almost terrified her. Lord St. Eval certainly looked a little disturbed at Emmeline's continued questions, and perceiving it, she hesitatingly but frankly said—

"I really beg your pardon, my lord, for my unjustifiable curiosity; mamma is always reproving me for it, and certainly I deserve her lecture now. But will you really find out Mary and be the bearer of a small parcel for me?"

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"With the greatest pleasure; for it will give me an object, which I had not before, and a most pleasing one, if I may hope your friend will not object to my intrusion."

"A friend of mine will ever be warmly welcomed by Mary," said Emmeline, with eagerness, but checking herself.

"Then may I hope you will continue to regard me as your friend, and still speak of me as Eugene, though perhaps a year or more may pass before you see me again?" demanded the young Earl, somewhat sadly, glancing towards Mrs. Hamilton, as if for her approval.

"As my brother Eugene—yes," answered Emmeline, quickly, and perhaps archly. A shadow passed over his brow.

"As your *friend*," he repeated, laying an emphasis on the word, which to any one less innocent of the world than Emmeline, would at once have excited their suspicion, and which single word at once told Mrs. Hamilton that all her cherished hopes were blighted. She read confirmation in her husband's countenance, and for a few minutes stood bewildered.

"I leave town in a few hours for my father's seat," added St. Eval, turning to Mrs. Hamilton. "I may amuse myself by taking Devonshire in my way, or rather going out of my way for that purpose. Have you any commands at Oakwood that I can perform?"

Mrs. Hamilton answered thankfully in the negative, but Emmeline exclaimed—

"I have a good mind to make you bearer of a letter and a *gage d'amour* to my good old nurse; she will be so delighted to hear of me, and her postman a nobleman. Poor nurse will have food for conversation and pleasurable reflection till we return."

"Any thing you like, only make me of use; and let me have it in an hour's time, or perhaps I can give you two."

"One will be all-sufficient; but what a wonderful desire to be useful has seized you all in a minute," replied Emmeline, whose high spirits appeared on that day utterly uncontrollable, and she ran on unmindful of her mother's glance. "But if I really do this, I must bid you farewell at once, or I shall have no time. Think of me, if any thing extraordinary meets your eye, or occurs to you, and treasure it up for my information, as you know my taste for the marvellous. My letter to Mary shall be forwarded to you, for I really depend on your seeking her, and telling her all about us; and now, then, with every wish for your pleasant journey, I must wish you good-bye."

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"Good-bye, dear, happy Emmeline," he said, with earnestness. "May you be as light-hearted and joyous, and as kind when we met again as now; may I commission you with my warmest remembrances and kind adieus to your cousin, whom I am sorry I have not chanced to see this morning?"

"They shall be duly delivered," answered Emmeline, and kissing her hand gayly in adieu, she tripped lightly out of the room, and St. Eval instantly turned towards Mrs. Hamilton.

"In this intention of leaving England for a few months, or perhaps a year," he said, striving for calmness, but speaking in a tone of sadness, "you will at once perceive that my cherished hopes for the future are blighted. I will not linger on the subject, for I cannot yet bear disappointment such as this with composure. Were I of different mould, I might, spite of coldness and pride, continue my addresses; and were you as other parents are, Caroline—Miss Hamilton might still be mine; a fashionable marriage it would still be, but, thank God, such will not be; even to bestow your child on one you might value more than me, you would not trample on her affections, you would not consent that she should be an unwilling bride, and I—oh! I could not—could not wed with one who loved me not. My dream of happiness has ended—been painfully dispelled; the blow was unexpected, and has found me unprepared. I leave England, lest my ungoverned feelings should lead me wrong. Mrs. Hamilton," he continued, more vehemently, "you understand my peculiar feelings, and can well guess the tortures I am now enduring. You know why I am reserved, because I dread the outbreak of emotion even in the most trifling circumstances. Oh, to have been your son——" he paused abruptly, and hurriedly paced the room. "Forgive me," he said, more calmly. "Only say you approve of my resolution to seek change for a short time, till I obtain self-government, and can behold her without pain; say that I am doing right for myself. I cannot think."

"You are right, quite right," replied Mrs. Hamilton instantly, and her husband confirmed her words. "I do approve your resolution, though deeply, most deeply, I regret its cause, St. Eval. Your disappointment is most bitter, but you grieve not alone. To have given Caroline to you, to behold her your wife, would have fulfilled every fervent wish of which she is the object. Not you alone have been deceived; her conduct has been such as to mislead those who have known her from childhood. St. Eval, she is not worthy of you."

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Disappointed, not only at the blighting of every secret hope, not those alone in which St. Eval was concerned, but every fond thought she had indulged in the purity and integrity of her child, in which, though her confidence had been given to another, she had still implicitly trusted, the most bitter disappointment and natural displeasure filled that mother's heart, and almost for the first time since their union Mr. Hamilton could read this unwonted emotion, in one usually so gentle, in her kindling eyes and agitated voice.

"Child of my heart, my hopes, my care, as she is, I must yet speak it, forget her Eugene; let not the thought of a deceiver, a coquette, debar you from the possession of that peace which should ever be the portion of one so truly honorable, so wholly estimable as yourself. You are disappointed, pained; but you know not—cannot guess the agony it is to find the integrity in which I so fondly trusted is as nought; that my child, my own child, whom I had hoped to lead through life without a stain, is capable of such conduct."

Emotion choked her voice. She had been carried on by the violence of her feelings, and perhaps said more in that moment of excitement than she either wished or intended.

St. Eval gazed on the noble woman before him with unfeigned admiration. He saw the indignation, the displeasure which she felt; it heightened the dignity of her character in his estimation: but he now began to tremble for its effects upon her child.

"Do not, my dear Mrs. Hamilton," he said, with some hesitation, "permit Miss Hamilton's rejection of me to excite your displeasure towards her. If with me she could not be happy, she was right to refuse my hand. Let me not have the misery of feeling I have caused dissension in a family whose beautiful unity has ever bound me to it. Surely you would not urge the affections of your child."

"Never," replied Mrs. Hamilton, earnestly. "I understand your fears, but let them pass away. I shall urge nothing, but my duty I must do. Much as I admire the exalted sentiments you express, I must equally deplore the mistaken conduct of my child. She has wilfully sported with the most sacred of human feelings. Once more I say, she is not worthy to be yours."

The indignation and strong emotion still lingering in her voice convinced St. Eval that he might urge no more. Respectfully he took his leave.

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CHAPTER V.

MRS. HAMILTON sat silently revolving in her mind all Caroline's late conduct, but vainly endeavoring to discover one single good reason to justify her rejection of St. Eval. In vain striving to believe all must have been mistaken, she had not given him encouragement. That her affections could have become secretly engaged was a thing so unlikely, that even when Mrs. Hamilton suggested it, both she and her husband banished the idea as impossible; for St. Eval alone had she evinced any marked preference.

"You must speak to her, Emmeline, I dare not; for I feel too angry and disappointed to argue calmly. She has deceived us; all your cares appear to have been of no avail; all the watchful tenderness with which she has been treated thus returned! I could have forgiven it, I would not have said another word, if she had conducted herself towards him with propriety; but to give him encouragement, such as all who have seen them together must have remarked; to attract him by every winning art, to chain him to her side, and then reject him with scorn. What could have caused her conduct, but the wish to display her power, her triumph over one so superior? Well might he say she had sunk in his estimation. Why did we not question her, instead of thus fondly trusting in her integrity? Emmeline, we have trusted our child too confidently, and thus our reliance is rewarded.

Seldom, if ever, had Mrs. Hamilton seen her husband so disturbed; for some little time she remained with him, and succeeded partly in soothing his natural displeasure. She then left him to compose her own troubled and disappointed feelings ere she desired the presence of her child. Meanwhile, as the happy Emmeline went to prepare her little packet for her dear old nurse, the thought suddenly arose that St. Eval had sent his remembrances and adieus to Ellen only, he had not mentioned Caroline; and, unsophisticated as she was, this struck her as something very strange, and she was not long in connecting this circumstance with his sudden departure. Wild, sportive, and innocent as Emmeline was, she yet possessed a depth of reflection and clearness of perception, which those who only knew her casually might not have expected. She had marked with extreme pleasure that which she believed the mutual attachment of St. Eval and her sister; and with her

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ready fancy ever at work, had indulged very often in airy visions, in which she beheld Caroline Countess St. Eval, and mistress of that beautiful estate in Cornwall, which she had heard Mrs. Hamilton say had been presented by the Marquis of Malvern to his son on his twenty-first birthday. Emmeline had indulged these fancies, and noticed the conduct of Caroline and St. Eval till she really believed their union would take place. She had been so delighted at the receipt of Mary's letter, that she had no time to remember the young Earl's departure; but when she was alone, that truth suddenly flashed across her mind, and another strange incident, though at the time she had not remarked it, when she had said as her brother she would remember him, he had repeated, with startling emphasis, "as her *friend*." "What could it all mean?" she thought, "Caroline cannot have rejected him? No, that is quite impossible. My sister would surely not be such a practised coquette; I must seek her and have the mystery solved. Surely she will be sorry St. Eval leaves us so soon."

Emmeline hastened first to Ellen, begging her to pack up the little packet for Mrs. Langford, for she knew such an opportunity would be as acceptable to her cousin as to herself; for Ellen never forgot the humble kindness and prompt attention she had received from the widow during her long and tedious illness; but by little offerings, and what the good woman still more valued, by a few kind and playful lines, which ever accompanied them, she endeavored to prove her sense of Widow Langford's conduct.

In five minutes more Emmeline was in her sister's room. Caroline was partly dressed as if for a morning drive, and her attendant leaving just as her sister entered. She looked pale and more fatigued than usual, from the gayety of the preceding night. Happy she certainly did not look, and forgetting in that sight the indignation which the very supposition of coquetry in her sister had excited, Emmeline gently approached her, and kissing her cheek, said, fondly—

"What is the matter, dear Caroline? You look ill, wearied, and even melancholy. Did you dance more than usual last night?"

"No," replied Caroline; "I believe not. I do not think I am more tired than usual. But what do you come for, Emmeline? Some reason must bring you here, for you are generally hard at work at this time of the day."

"My wits have been so disturbed by Mary's letter, that I

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have been unable to settle to any thing," replied her sister laughing; "and to add to their disturbance, I have just heard something so strange, that I could not resist coming to tell you."

"Of what nature?"

"St. Eval leaves London to-day for Castle Malvern, and next week quits England. Now is not that extraordinary?"

Caroline became suddenly flushed with crimson, which quickly receding, left her even paler than before.

"She is innocent," thought Emmeline. "She loves him. St. Eval must have behaved ill to her; and yet he certainly looked more sinned against than sinning."

"To-day: does he leave to-day?" Caroline said, at length, speaking, it appeared, with effort, and turning to avoid her sister's glance.

"In little more than an hour's time; but I am sorry I told you, dear Caroline, if the news has pained you."

"Pained me," repeated her sister, with returning haughtiness; "what can you mean, Emmeline? Lord St. Eval is nothing to me."

"Nothing!" repeated the astonished girl. "Caroline, you are incomprehensible. Why did you treat him with such marked attention if you cared nothing for him?"

"For a very simple reason; because it gave me pleasure to prove that it was in my power to do that for which other girls have tried in vain—compel the proud lordly St. Eval to bow to a woman's will." Pride had returned again. She felt the pleasure of triumphant power, and her eyes sparkled and her cheek again flushed, but with a different emotion to that she had felt before.

"Do you mean, then, that you have never loved him, and merely sported with his feelings, for your own amusement? Caroline, I will not believe it. You could not have acted with such cruelty; you do love him, but you reject my confidence. I do not ask you to confide in me, though I did hope I should have been your chosen friend; but I beseech, I implore you, Caroline, only to say that you are jesting. You do love him."

"You are mistaken, Emmeline, never more so in your life. I have refused his offered hand; if you wish my confidence on this subject, I give it you. As he is a favorite of yours, I do not doubt your preserving his secret inviolate. I might have been Countess of St. Eval, but my end was accomplished, and I dismissed my devoted cavalier."

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"And can you, dare you jest on such a subject?" exclaimed Emmeline, indignantly. "Is it possible you can have wilfully acted thus? sported with the feelings of such a man as St. Eval, laughed at his pain, called forth his love to gratify your desire of power? Caroline, shame on you!"

"I am not in the habit of being schooled as to right and wrong by a younger sister, nor will I put up with it now, Emmeline. I never interfere with your conduct, and therefore you will, if you please, do the same with me. I am not responsible to you for my actions, nor shall I ever be," replied Caroline, with cold yet angry pride.

"But I will speak when I know you have acted contrary to those principles mamma has ever endeavored to instil into us both," replied Emmeline, still indignantly; and you are and have been ever welcome to remonstrate with me. I am not so weak as I once was, fearful to speak my sentiments even when I knew them to be right. You have acted shamefully, cruelly, Caroline, and I will tell you what I think, angry as it may make you."

A haughty and contemptuous answer rose to Caroline's lips, but she was prevented giving it utterance by the entrance of Martyn, her mother's maid, with her lady's commands, that Miss Hamilton should attend her in the boudoir.

"How provoking!" she exclaimed. "I expect Annie to call for me every minute, and mamma will perhaps detain me half an hour; and most unwillingly she obeyed the summons.

"Annie," repeated Emmeline, when her sister had left the room, "Annie—this is her work; if my sister had not been thus intimate with her she never would have acted in this manner." And so disturbed was the gentle girl at this confirmation of her fears, that it was some little time before she could recover sufficient serenity to rejoin Ellen in arranging the widow's packet.

Mrs. Langford had the charge of Oakwood during the absence of the family, and Mrs. Hamilton, recollecting some affairs concerning the village schools she wished the widow to attend to, was writing her directions as Caroline entered, much to the latter's increased annoyance, as her mother's business with her would thus be retarded, and every minute drew the time of Annie's appointment nearer. She could scarcely conceal her impatience, and did venture to beg her mother to tell her what she required.

"Your attention, Caroline, for a time," she replied, so coldly

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that her daughter felt instantly something was wrong, though what she guessed not, for she knew not that St. Eval had obtained the sanction of her parents for his addresses; and she little imagined he could have any thing to do with the displeasure she saw so clearly marked.

"You will wait, if you please, till I have finished writing, as this cannot be delayed. Lord St. Eval leaves town in a very short time, and I send this by him."

"Lord St. Eval," thought Caroline, suddenly becoming alarmed, "surely mamma and papa know nothing of his offer."

A few minutes passed in silence, which was broken by the sound of carriage-wheels stopping at the door, and Robert almost instantly after entered with Miss Grahame's love, saying she could not wait a minute, and hoped Miss Hamilton was ready.

"Miss Grahame!" repeated Mrs. Hamilton, in an accent of surprise, before Caroline had time to make any answer; "Caroline, why have you not mentioned this engagement? You do not generally make appointments without at least consulting me, if you no longer think it necessary to request my permission. Where are you going with Annie?"

"To Oxford Street, I believe," she answered carelessly, to conceal her rising indignation at this interference of her mother.

"If you require any thing there, you can go with me by and by. Robert, give my compliments to Miss Grahame, and say from me, Miss Hamilton is particularly engaged with me at present, and therefore cannot keep her engagement to-day. Return here as soon as you have delivered my message."

"Mother!" burst from Caroline's lips, in an accent of uncontrollable anger, as soon as the servant had left the room; but with a strong effort she checked herself, and hastily walked to the window.

An expression of extreme pain passed across her mother's features as she looked towards her, but she took no notice till Robert had returned, and had been dismissed with her note to be given to Emmeline to transmit with hers.

"Caroline," she then said, with dignity, yet perhaps less coldly than before, "if you will give me your attention for a short time, you will learn the cause of my displeasure, which is perhaps at present incomprehensible, unless, indeed, your own conscience has already reproached you; but before I commence on any other subject, I must request that you will

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make no more appointments with Miss Grahame without my permission. This is not the first time you have done so; I have not noticed it previously, because I thought your own good sense would have told you that you were acting wrong, and contrary to those principles of candor I believed you to possess."

"You were always prejudiced against Annie," answered Caroline, with raising anger, for she had quite determined not to sit silent while her mother spoke, cost what it might.

"I am not speaking of Annie, Caroline, but to you. The change in your conduct since you have become thus intimate with her, might indeed justify my prejudice, but on that I am not now dwelling. I do not consider Miss Malison a fit chaperon for my daughter, and therefore I desire you will not again join her in her drives."

"Every other girl of my station has the privilege of at least choosing her own companions without animadversion," replied Caroline, indignantly, "and in the simple thing of making appointments without interference it is hard that I alone am to be an exception."

"If you look around the circle in which I visit intimately, Caroline, you will find that did you act according to your own wishes, you would stand more alone than were you to regard mine. I have done wrong in ever allowing you to be as intimate with Miss Grahame as you are. You looked surprised and angry when I mentioned the change that had taken place in your conduct."

"I had sufficient reason for surprise," replied Caroline, impatiently; "I was not aware that my character was so weak, as to turn and change with every new acquaintance."

"Are you then the same girl you were at Oakwood?" demanded Mrs. Hamilton, gravely yet sadly.

A sudden pang of conscience smote the heart of the mistaken girl at these words, a sob rose choking in her throat, and she longed to have given vent to the tears which pride, anger, and remorse were summoning, but she would not, and answered according to those evil whisperings, which before she had only indulged in secret.

"If I am changed," she answered passionately, "it is because neither you nor papa are the same. At Oakwood I was free, I had full liberty to act, speak, think as I pleased, while here a chain is thrown around my simplest action; my very words are turned into weapons against me; my friendship dis-

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approved of, and in that at least surely I may have liberty to choose for myself."

"You have," replied Mrs. Hamilton, mildly. "I complain not, Caroline, of the pain you have inflicted upon me, in so completely withdrawing your confidence and friendship, to bestow them upon a young girl. I control not your affection, but it is my duty, and I will obey it, to warn you when I see your favorite companion likely to lead you wrong. Had your every thought and feeling been open to my inspection as at Oakwood, would you have trifled as you have with the most sacred feelings of a fellow creature? would you have called forth love by every winning art, by marked preference, to reject it, when acknowledged, with scorn, with triumph ill-concealed? would you have sported thus with a heart whose affections would do honor to the favored one on whom they were bestowed? would you have cast aside in this manner all that integrity and honor I hoped and believed were your own? Caroline, you have disappointed and deceived your parents; you have blighted their fondest hopes, and destroyed, sinfully destroyed, the peace of a noble, virtuous, excellent young man, who loved you with all the deep fervor of an enthusiastic soul. To have beheld him your husband would have fulfilled every wish, every hope entertained by your father and myself. I would have intrusted your happiness to his care without one doubt arising within me; and you have spurned his offer, rejected him without reason, without regret, without sympathy for his wounded and disappointed feelings, without giving him one hope that in time his affections might be returned. Caroline, why have you thus decidedly rejected him? what is there in the young man you see to bid you tremble for your future happiness?"

Caroline answered not; she had leaned her arms on the cushion of the couch, and buried her face upon them, while her mother spoke, and Mrs. Hamilton in vain waited for her reply.

"Caroline," she continued, in a tone of such appealing affection, it seemed strange that it touched not the heart of her child, "Caroline, I will not intrude on your confidence, but one question I must ask, and I implore you to answer me truly —do you love another?"

Still Caroline spoke not, moved not. Her mother continued, "If you do, why should you hide it from me, your own mother, Caroline? You believe my conduct changed towards you, but you have condemned me without proof. You have

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abandoned my sympathy—shrunk from my love. Try me now, my sweet child, if you love another, confess it, and we will do what we can to make that love happy; if it be returned, why should you conceal it? and if it be not, Caroline, my child, will you refuse even the poor comfort your mother can bestow?"

She spoke in vain; but could she have read her daughter's heart at that moment, maternal affection might not have been so deeply pained as it was by this strange silence. Regret, deep, though unavailing, had been Caroline's portion, from the moment she had reflected soberly on her rejection of St. Eval. She recalled his every word, his looks of respectful yet ardent admiration, and she wept at that infatuation which had bade her act as she had done; and then his look of controlled contempt stung her to the quick. He meant not, perhaps, that his glance should have so clearly denoted that she had sunk in his estimation, it did not at the moment, but it did when in solitude she recalled it, and she felt that she deserved it. In vain in those moments did she struggle to call up the vision of Lord Alphingham, his words of love, his looks of even more fervid passion, his image would not rise to banish that of St. Eval; and if Caroline had not still been blinded by the influence and arguments of Annie, had she given her own good sense one half-hour's uncontrolled dominion, she would have discovered, that if love had secretly and unsuspiciously entered her heart, it was not for Lord Alphingham. Had she really loved him, she could not have resisted the fond appeal of her mother; but to express in words all the confused and indefinable emotions then filling her heart was impossible. She continued for several minutes silent, and Mrs. Hamilton felt too deeply pained and disappointed to speak again. Her daughter had spoken to her that morning as she had seldom done even in her childhood. Then her mother could look forward to years of reason and maturity for the improvement of those errors; now others had arisen, and if her control were once so entirely thrown aside, could she ever regain sufficient influence to lead her right. Seldom had Caroline's conduct given her so much pain as in the disclosures and events of that morning.

"Is it absolutely necessary," Caroline at length said, summoning, as her aunt Eleanor had often done, pride to drown the whisperings of conscience, "that I must love another, because I rejected Lord St. Eval? In such an important step as marriage, I should imagine my own inclinations were the first to be consulted. It would be strange indeed, if, after all I have

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heard you say on the evil of forcing young women to marry, that you should compel your own child to accept the first offer she received."

"You do me injustice, Caroline," replied her mother, controlling with an effort natural displeasure; "St. Eval would not accept an unwilling bride, nor after what has passed would your father and myself deem you worthy to become his wife."

"Then long may this paragon of excellence remain away," replied Caroline, with indignant haughtiness kindling in every feature. "I have no wish ever to associate again with one by whose side I am deemed so unworthy, even by my parents."

"Those who love you best, Caroline, are ever the first to behold and deplore your faults. Have you acted honorably; have you done worthily in exciting love merely to give pain, to amuse and gratify your own love of power?"

"I have done no more than other girls do with impunity, without even notice; and surely that which is so generally practised cannot demand such severe censure as you bestow on it."

"And therefore you would make custom an excuse for sin, Caroline. Would you have spoken thus a few months since? would you have questioned the justice of your mother's sentences? and yet you say you are not changed. Is it any excuse for a wrong action, because others do it? Had you been differently instructed it might be, but not when from your earliest years I have endeavoured to reason with, and to convince you of the sin of coquetry, to which from a child you have been inclined. You have acted more sinfully than many whose coquetry has been more general. You devoted yourself to one alone, encouraged, flattered, because you say he was already attracted, instead of adhering to that distant behavior which would have at once told him you could feel no more for him than as a friend. You would have prevented future suffering, by banishing from the first all secret hopes; but no, you wished to prove you could accomplish more than others, by captivating one so reserved and superior as St. Eval. Do not interrupt me by a denial, Caroline, for you dare not deliberately say such was not your motive. That noble integrity which I have so long believed your own, you have exiled from your heart. Your entire conduct towards St. Eval has been one continued falsehood, and are you then worthy to be united to one who is truth, honor, nobleness itself? Had you loved another, your rejection of this young man might have been

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excused, but not your behavior towards him; for that not one good reason can be brought forward in excuse. I am speaking severely, Caroline, and perhaps my every word may alienate your confidence and affection still farther from me; but my duty shall be done, painful as it may be both to yourself and me. I cannot speak tamely on a subject in which the future character and welfare of my child are concerned. I can no longer trust in your integrity. Spite of your change in manner and in feeling towards me, I still confided in your unsullied honor; that I can no longer do; you have forfeited my confidence, Caroline, and not until I see a total change of conduct, can you ever hope to regain it. That perhaps will not grieve you, as it would once have done; but unless you redeem your character," she continued, "the serious displeasure of both your father and myself will be yours, and we shall, in all probability, find some means of withdrawing you from the society which has been so injurious to the purity of your character. Whatever others may do, it is your duty to act according to the principles of your parents, and not to those of others; and therefore, for the future, I desire you will abide by my criterion of right and wrong, and not by the misleading laws of custom. When you have conquered the irritation and anger which my words have occasioned, you may perhaps agree to the justice of what I have said; till then I do not expect it; but whether your reason approves of it or not, I desire your implicit obedience. If you have any thing you desire to do, you may leave me, Caroline, I do not wish to detain you any longer."

In silence, too sullen to give any hope of a repentant feeling or judgment convinced, Caroline had listened to her mother's words. They were indeed unusually severe; but her manner from the beginning of that interview could not have lessened the displeasure which she already felt. We have known Mrs. Hamilton from the commencement of her career when as a girl not older than Caroline herself, she mingled with the world, and we cannot fail to have perceived her detestation of the fashionable sin of coquetry. The remembrance of Eleanor and all the evils she entailed upon herself by the indulgence of that sinful fault, were still vividly acute, and cost what it might, both to herself and, who was dearer still, her child, she would do her duty, and endeavor to turn her from the evil path. She saw that Caroline was in no mood for gentler words and tenderness to have any effect, and there-

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fore, though at variance as it was to her nature, she spoke with some severity and her usual unwavering decision. She could read no promise of amendment or contrition in those haughty and sullen features, but she urged no more, for it might only exasperate and lead her farther from conviction.

For some few minutes Caroline remained in that same posture. Evil passions of varied nature suddenly appeared to gain ascendency in that innately noble heart, and prevented all expressions that might have soothed her mother's solicitude. Hastily rising, without a word, she abruptly left the room and retired to her own, where she gave vent to a brief but passionate flood of tears, but they cooled not the fever of her brain; her haughty spirit revolted from her mother's just severity.

"To be scolded, threatened, desired to obey like a child, an infant; what girl of my age would bear it tamely? Well might Anne say I was a slave, not permitted to act or even think according to my own discretion; well might she say no other mother behaved to her daughters as mine; to be kept in complete thraldom; to be threatened, if I do not behave better, to be removed from the scenes I so much love, buried again at home I suppose; is it a wonder I am changed? Is it strange that I should no longer feel for mamma as formerly? and even Emmeline must condemn me, call me to account for my actions, and my intimacy with Anne is made a subject of reproach; but if I do not see her as often as before, I can write, thank heaven, and at least her sympathy and affection will be mine."

Such was the tenor of her secret thoughts, and she followed them up by writing to her friend a lengthened and heightened description of all that had occurred that morning, dwelling long and indignantly on what she termed the cruel and unjust severity of her mother, and imploring, as such confidential letters generally did, Annie's secrecy and sympathy. The epistle was dispatched, and quickly answered, in a style which, as might be imagined, increased all Caroline's feeling of indignation towards her parents, and bade her rely still more confidingly on her false friend, who, she taught herself to believe, was almost the only person who really cared for her best interests.

Days passed, but neither Mr. nor Mrs. Hamilton changed in the coldness of their manner towards their child. Perhaps such conduct added fire to the already resentful girl; but surely they might be pardoned for acting as they did. Caro-

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line's irritability increased, and Annie's secret letters were ever at hand to soothe while they excited. She ever endeavored to turn her friend's attention from what she termed her severe trials to the devotion felt towards her by Lord Alphingham, declaring that each interview confirmed more and more her belief in his passionate admiration. The evil influence which Miss Grahame's letters had upon the mind of Caroline in her private hours, was apparent in her manner to Lord Alphingham, when they chanced to meet, but even more guarded than she had hitherto been, did Caroline become in her behavior towards him when her parents were present. Their conduct had confirmed, to her heated and mistaken fancy, Annie's representation of their unjustifiable severity, and that, indignant at her rejection of St. Eval, they would unhesitatingly refuse their consent to her acceptance of the Viscount. Caroline thought not to ask herself, how then is my intimacy with him to end? She only enjoyed the present as much as she could, while the coldness of her parents, amidst all her pride and boasted stoicism, still tortured her; and to the future Annie as yet completely prevented her looking. Miss Grahame's plans appeared indeed to thrive, and many were the confidential and triumphant conversations she held upon the subject with Miss Malison, who became more and more indignant at Mrs. Hamilton's intrusive conduct in taking so much notice of Lilla, notwithstanding the tales industriously circulated against her. Her own severity and malevolence, however, appeared about to become her foes; for about this time a slight change with regard to the happiness of her injured pupil took place, which threatened to banish her from Mr. Grahame's family.

One morning Mrs. Hamilton, accompanied by Ellen, called on Lady Helen rather earlier than usual, but found their friend not yet visible, an attack of indisposition confining her to her couch later than usual, but Lady Helen sending to entreat her friend not to leave her house without seeing her, Mrs. Hamilton determined on waiting. Annie had gone out with Miss Malison.

"No wonder our poor Lilla proceeds so slowly in her education," remarked Mrs. Hamilton, when the footman gave her this information. "If she be so much neglected, her father has no right to expect much progress. I wish from my heart that I could think of some plan that would tend not only to the happiness of this poor girl, but in the end to that of her

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father also. Were those faults now apparent in her character judiciously removed, I feel confident Mr. Grahame would have more comfort in her than in either of his other children."

"She is always very different when she is with us," observed Ellen. "I can never discover those evil passions of which so many accuse her; passionate she is, but that might be controlled."

"It can never be while Miss Malison remains with her, for her treatment is such that each year but increases the evil."

A sound as of some one sobbing violently in the adjoining room interrupted their conversation. Fancying it came from the object of their conversation, Mrs. Hamilton opened the folding-doors, and discovered her young friend weeping violently, almost convulsively, on the sofa. Ever alive to sorrow, of whatever nature or at whatever age, Mrs. Hamilton, followed by Ellen, hastened towards her.

"What has happened, Lilla?" she said, soothingly. "What has chanced to call forth this violent grief? tell me, my love. You know you need not hesitate to trust me with your sorrows."

Unused, save from that one dear friend, to hear the voice of sympathy and kindness, Lilla flung her arms passionately round her neck, and clung to her for some few minutes till her choking sobs permitted her to speak.

"Aunt Augusta says I am so wicked, so very wicked, that mamma ought not to keep me at home, that I am not at all too old to go to school, and mamma says that I shall go—and —and"—

"But what occasioned your aunt to advise such an alternative?" demanded Mrs. Hamilton, gently.

"Oh, because—because I know I was very wicked, but I could not help it. Miss Malison had been tormenting me all the morning, and exciting my anger; and then Annie chose to do all she could to call it forth before mamma, and so I just told her what I thought of both her and her amiable confidant. I hate them both," she continued, with a vehemence even the presence of Mrs. Hamilton could not restrain, "and I wish from my heart I could never see them more."

"If you gave vent to such sinful words before your mother," replied Mrs. Hamilton, gravely, "I do not wonder at your aunt's suggesting what she did. How often have I entreated you to leave the room when your sister commences her unkind endeavors to excite your anger, and thus give your mother a

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proof of your consideration for her present state of health, and evince to your sister, that if you cannot calmly listen to her words, you can at least avoid them."

"Mamma never takes any notice, however much I may endeavor to please her; if she would only caress me, and praise me sometimes, I know I should be a very different girl. Then I could bear all Annie's cruel words; but I will not, I will never put up with them, and permit either her or Miss Malison to govern me and chain down my spirit, as they try all they can to do. No one can ever know the constant ill-treatment which I receive from both; every thing I do, every word I speak, is altered to suit their purpose, and mamma believes all they say. They shall feel my power one day when they least expect it. I will not be made so constantly miserable unrevenged."

"Lilla, dear Lilla," exclaimed Ellen, imploringly, "do not speak thus; you do not know what you say. You would not return evil for evil, and on your sister. Do not, pray do not let your anger, however just, obtain so much dominion."

"Annie never treats me as a sister, and I do not see why I should practise such forbearance towards her; but I will do all I can, indeed I will, if you will persuade papa not to send me from home. Oh, do not look at me so gravely and sadly, dearest, dearest Mrs. Hamilton," continued the impetuous and misguided but naturally right-feeling child.

"I can bear any one's displeasure but yours; but when you look displeased with me I feel so very, very wretched. I know I deserve to lose all your kindness, for I never follow your advice; I deserve that you should hate me, as every one else does; but you do not know all I have to endure. Oh! do not let me go from home."

"I cannot persuade your father to let you remain at home, my dear girl," replied Mrs. Hamilton, drawing her young companion closer to her, and speaking with soothing tenderness, "because I agree with your aunt in thinking it would be really the best thing for you."

"Then I have lost every hope," exclaimed the impatient girl, clasping her hands despairingly. "Papa would never have consented, if you had advised him not, and you, you must think me as wicked as aunt Augusta does;" and the tears she had checked now burst violently forth anew.

"You mistake me, my love, quite mistake me; it is not because I believe you are not fitted to associate with your domestic circle I believe if she were but properly encouraged, my little

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Lilla would add much to the comfort of both her parents; and I do not at all despair of seeing that the case. But at present I must advise your leaving home for a few years, because I really do think it would add much to your happiness."

"Happiness!" repeated Lilla, in an accent of extreme surprise. "School bring happiness?"

"Are you happy at home, my love? Is not your life at present one continued scene of wretchedness? What is it that you so much dislike in the idea of school?"

"The control, the subordination, the irksome formula of lessons, prim governesses, satirical scholars." Neither Mrs Hamilton nor Ellen could prevent a smile.

"If such things are all you dread, my dear, I have no fear of soon overcoming them," the former said, playfully. "I will do all I can to persuade your father not to send you to a large fashionable seminary, where such things may be the case; but I know a lady who lives at Hampstead, and under whose kind guidance I am sure you will be happy, much more so than you are now. If you would only think calmly on the subject, I am sure you would agree in all I urge."

"But no one treats me as a reasonable person at home. If mamma sends me to school, it will not be for my happiness, but because every body thinks me so wicked, there is no managing me at home; and then in the holidays I shall hear nothing but the wonderful improvement school discipline has made; it will be no credit to my own efforts, and so there will be no pleasure in making any."

"Will there be no pleasure in making your father happy, Lilla? Will his approbation be nothing?"

"But he never praises me; I am too much afraid of him to go and caress him, as I often wish to do, and tell him if he will only call me his dear Lilla, I would be good and gentle, and learn all he desires. If he would but let me love him, I should be much happier than I am."

Mrs. Hamilton thought so too; and deeply she regretted that mistaken sternness which had so completely alienated the affections of his child. Soothingly she answered—

"But your father dearly loves you, Lilla, though perhaps your violent conduct has of late prevented his showing it. If you were, for his sake, to become gentle and amiable, and overcome your fears of his sternness, believe me, my dear Lilla, you would be rendering him and yourself much happier. You always tell me you believe every thing I say. Suppose

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you trust in my assertion, and try the experiment; and if you want a second voice on my side, I appeal to your friend Ellen for her vote as to the truth of what I say."

Mrs. Hamilton spoke playfully, and Ellen answered in the same spirit. Lilla's passionate tears had been checked by the kind treatment she received, and in a softened mood she answered—

"But I cannot become so while Miss Malison has any thing to do with me. I cannot bear her treatment gently. Papa does not know all I have to endure with her."

"And therefore do I so earnestly wish you would consent to my persuading your father to let you go to Hampstead," answered Mrs. Hamilton, gently.

"But then papa will not think it is for his sake I endeavor to correct my faults: he will say it is the school, and not my own efforts; and if I go, I shall never, never see you, nor go to dear Woodlands, for I shall be away while papa and mamma are there; away from every body I love. Oh, that would not make me happy!" and clinging to Mrs. Hamilton, the really affectionate girl again burst into tears.

"What am I to urge in reply to these very weighty objections, my dear Lilla?" replied Mrs. Hamilton. "In the first place, your father shall know that every conquest you make is for his sake; he shall not think you were forced to submission. In the next, compulsion is not in my friend's system. And as I am very intimate with Mrs. Douglas, I shall very often come and see you when I am in town, your midsummer holidays will also occur during that time; and, lastly, if your papa and mamma will consent, you shall see Woodlands every year; for I shall ask Mr. Grahame to bring you with him in his annual Christmas visit to his estate, and petition that he will leave you behind him to spend the whole of your winter vacation with me and Ellen at Oakwood. Now, are all objections waived, or has my very determined opponent any more to bring forward?"

Lilla did not answer, but she raised her head from her kind friend's shoulder, and pushing back the disordered locks of her bright hair, looked up in her face as if no more sorrow could be her portion.

"Oh, I would remain at school a whole year together, if I might spend my vacation at Oakwood with you, and Ellen, and Emmeline, and all!" she exclaimed, with a glee as wild and childish as all her former emotion had been. Lady Helen at

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that instant entered, and after languidly greeting Mrs. Hamilton and Ellen, exclaimed—

"For heaven's sake, Lilla, go away! your appearance is enough to frighten any one. I should be absolutely ashamed of you, if any friend were to come in unexpectedly. Perhaps you may choose to obey me now that Mrs. Hamilton is present; she little knows what a trouble you are at home," she continued, languidly.

The flush of passion again mounted to Lilla's cheek, but Ellen, taking her arm, entreated to go with her, and they left the room together, while Lady Helen amused her friend by a long account of her domestic misfortunes, the insolence of her upper domestics, the heedlessness of her elder, and the fearful passions of her younger daughter, even the carelessness of her husband's manner towards her, notwithstanding her evidently declining health, all these and similar sorrows were poured into the sympathizing ear of Mrs. Hamilton, and giving clearer and clearer evidence of Lady Helen's extreme and increasing weakness of mind and character.

Great, indeed, was the astonishment of this indolent mother when Mrs. Hamilton urged the necessity of sending Lilla to school. Without accusing Miss Malison of any want of judgment, she was yet enabled to work on Lady Augusta Denham's words, and prove the good effects that a removal from home for a few years might produce on Lilla's character.

Lady Augusta's advice had been merely remembered during that lady's presence, but seconded as it now was by the earnest pleadings of Mrs. Hamilton, she determined on rousing herself sufficiently to put it in force, if her husband consented; but to obtain his approbation was a task too terrible for her nerves, and she entreated Mrs. Hamilton to speak with him on the subject. Willingly she consented, only requesting that Lady Helen would not mention her intentions either to Annie or Miss Malison till her husband had been consulted, and to this Lady Helen willingly consented, for in secret she dreaded Miss Malison's lamentations and reproaches, when this arrangement should be known.

When Mr. Grahame, in compliance with Mrs. Hamilton's message, called on her the following morning, and heard the cause of his summons, his surprise almost equalled that of his wife. He knew her dislike to the plan of sending girls to school, however it might be in vogue; and almost in terror he asked if she proposed this scheme because the evil character

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of his child required some such desperate expedient. It was easy to prove to him such was very far from her meaning. She spoke more openly on the character of Lilla than she had yet done, for she thought their long years of intimacy demanded candor on her part; and each year, while it increased the evil of Lilla's present situation, heightened her earnest desire to draw the father and child more closely together. She did not palliate her faults, but she proved that they were increased by the constant contradiction and irritation which she had to encounter. She repeated all that had passed between them the preceding day, unconsciously and cautiously condemning Grahame's excessive sternness, by relating, almost verbatim, Lilla's simply expressed wish that her father would let her love him.

She gained her point. The softened and agitated father felt self-condemned as she proceeded; and earnestly implored her to give him one more proof of her friendship, by recommending him some lady under whose care he could with safety place his erring, yet naturally noble-minded and warm-hearted child. A fashionable seminary, he was sure, would do her more harm than good, and he listened with eagerness to Mrs. Hamilton's description of Mrs. Douglas. The widow of a naval officer, who had for several years been in the habit of educating ten young ladies of the highest rank, and she mentioned one or two who had been her pupils, whose worth and mental endowments were well known to Grahame.

"Do not be guided entirely by me on a subject so important," she said, after recalling those families to his mind, whose daughters had been placed there; "make inquiries of all who know Mrs. Douglas, and see her yourself before you quite decide. That I have a very high opinion of her is certain; but I should be sorry if you were to place Lilla with her upon my advice alone, when, in all probability," she added, with a smile, "you will find all Lady Helen's family opposed to the arrangement."

"As they have never guided me right when they have interfered with my children, their approbation or disapproval will have little weight in my determination," answered Grahame. "You have awakened me to a sense of my duty, Mrs. Hamilton, for which I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude. With too much reliance upon the opinions of others I have regarded the many tales brought against my poor child, and now I see how greatly her faults have been occasioned by mis

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taken treatment. I thought once I could never have parted with a daughter for school, but I now see it will be a kindness to do so; and pain me as it will, now I know that I may in time win her affections, your advice shall be followed."

"You must consent to part with her for one vacation also," replied Mrs. Hamilton, playfully. "I have promised, in answer to her weighty objection that she shall never see Woodlands again, to persuade you to let her spend Christmas at Oakwood. You must consent, or I shall teach Lilla a lesson of rebellion, and carry her off from Mrs. Douglas by force."

"Willingly, gratefully," exclaimed Mrs. Grahame.

"And you will promise me to permit her to love you, to use her own simple affectionate words before she leaves you; you will not terrify her by the cold sternness you frequently manifest towards her, and prove that you take sufficient interest in her, to love her more for every conquest she makes."

"Faithfully, faithfully I promise, my kind friend."

"Then I am satisfied," replied Mrs. Hamilton, her countenance glowing with benevolent pleasure. "I shall, I trust one day succeed in making my little Lilla happy, and thus add to the comfort of her parents. We are old friends, Mr. Grahame," she added, "and therefore I do not hesitate to express the pleasure you have given me by thus promising to think upon my advice. I began to fear that you would be displeased at my interference, deeming my advice impertinent and needless. I have endeavored to impress upon Lilla the necessity of a temporary absence from home, and have in part succeeded; and having Lady Helen's sanction to speak with you, I could hesitate no longer."

"Nor do I hesitate one moment to act upon your disinterested advice, my dear friend. Your word is enough; but as you so earnestly wish it, I will this very hour seek those of my friends who are acquainted with Mrs. Douglas. I must leave Lilla to express her gratitude for her father and herself."

Mrs. Hamilton was soon placed at rest regarding the destination of her young friend. There was not a dissenting voice as to Mrs. Douglas's worth, one general opinion of satisfaction prevailed; but the most gratifying tribute Grahame felt, was the affection and esteem which her former pupils still fondly encouraged towards her. Thus prepossessed, her appearance and manners did much to strengthen his resolve, and Grahame now felt armed for all encounters with those who, presuming on their near relationship to his wife, would bring forward

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numberless objections to his plan; but he was agreeably mis taken. Lilla was looked upon by them all as such an evil-minded, ill-informed girl, that it signified little where she was placed, as she generally brought discredit on all who had any thing to do with her. Miss Malison, however, excited their sympathy, and Annie declared it was a shameful and dishonorable thing to dismiss her without notice, after so many years of devoted service to their family. Poor Lady Helen had to encounter the storm of upbraiding from her daughter, and the tears and sobs of the governess, at the ill-treatment she received. In vain Lady Helen accepted her protestations that she had done her duty; that she was sure all that could be done for Miss Lilla had been done. Annie declared that, though her services were no longer required for her ungrateful sister, she could not do without Miss Malison, for her mother's health seldom permitted her to walk or drive out. She should absolutely die of *ennui* without some one to act in those cases as her chaperon. In this she was ably seconded by all her mother's family, whose *protégé* Miss Malison had long been, and against his better judgment, Grahame at length consented that Miss Malison should remain in his family till she should get another situation as finishing governess. This, of course, Miss Grahame had determined should not be for some little time.

Mrs. Hamilton had been particularly cautious, in her interview with Mr. Grahame, not to speak any word for or against Miss Malison; perhaps had she said what she really thought, even this concession would not have been made.

Mr. Grahame's fixed and sudden determination to send Lilla to school was, of course, laid by Annie and her confidant to Mrs. Hamilton's charge, and increased not a little their prejudice against her, adding fresh incentive to their schemes for the destruction of her peace, which Caroline's self-willed conduct now rendered even more easy than it had previously been.

When all was arranged, when it was decidedly settled that Lilla should join Mrs. Douglas's establishment at the conclusion of the midsummer vacation, her father quietly entered the study where she was alone, to give her this information, and his really fond heart could not gaze on her without admiration. She was now nearly fifteen, though in looks, manners, and conversation, from being kept under such continual restraint, she always appeared at first sight very much younger. Childlike

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in every movement, even her impetuosity might have aided the deception; and Lady Helen herself had so often indolently answered questions concerning her daughter's age, she believed she was about twelve or thirteen, that at length she really believed it was so. It was Annie and Miss Malison's interest to preserve this illusion; for were she recognized as fifteen, many privileges might have been acceded to her, very much at variance with their interest. Annie had no desire for a rival to present herself, which, had her sister appeared in public, would undoubtedly have been the case; Lilla gave promise of beauty, which, though not perhaps really so perfect as Annie's, would certainly have attracted fully as much notice. She was drawing a tiny wreath of brilliant flowers on a small portfolio, which she was regarding with a complacency that added brilliancy to her animated features. At her father's well-known step she looked up in some little terror, and rose, as was her custom whenever she first saw him in the morning; her fear could not check the sparkling lustre of her eye, and Grahame, taking her hand, said kindly—

"I have some news for my little girl, which I trust will prove as agreeable as I have every reason to hope they may. Mrs. Douglass will gladly consent to receive my Lilla as an inmate of her happy family."

The flush of animation, the sparkling lustre of her eye faded on the instant, and she turned away.

"Why, our kind friend, Mrs. Hamilton, bade me hope this would be pleasing intelligence; has she deceived me, love?" continued her father, drawing her with such unwonted tenderness to him, that, after a glance of bewilderment, she flung her arms round his neck, and for the first time in her life wept passionately on her father's shoulder.

"Can it be pleasure to hear I am to go from you and mamma?" she exclaimed, clinging to him with all the passionate warmth of her nature, and forgetting all her terror in that one moment of uncontrolled feeling. Her simple words confirmed at once all that Mrs. Hamilton had said in her favor, and the now gratified father seated her, as he would a little child, on his knee, and with affectionate caresses gradually soothed her to composure. Long did they converse together, and from that moment Lilla's happiness commenced. She could not at once lose her dread of her father's sternness, but the slightest hint from him was enough; and frequently, as Grahame felt her affectionate manner, would he wonder he had been blind

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to her character so long. The idea of school lost its repugnance. Her father's kindness enabled her to keep her determination, to prove, by the indulgence of the highest spirits, that going to school, instead of being a punishment, as her aunt Augusta intended it to be. was a privilege and a pleasure. That she was accused of want of feeling she little heeded, now that her father invited and encouraged her affection. Lady Helen wondered at her change of manner, but indolence and prejudice constantly instilled by Annie and Miss Malison, prevented all indulgence of more kindly feelings. As things remained in this state for some weeks in Mr. Grahame's establishment, we will now return to Mr. Hamilton's family.

It was about this time, some three or four weeks before the end of the Oxford term, that letters arrived from Percy and Herbert, containing matters of interesting information, and others which caused some anxiety in the breasts of Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton. On the first subject both the brothers wrote, so deeply interested had they become in it. Among the servitors or free scholars of their college was a young man, whom they had frequently noticed the last year, but never recollected having seen before. He shrunk, as it appeared, in sensitiveness from every eye, kept aloof from all companions, as if he felt himself above those who held the same rank in the University. Herbert's gentle and quickly sympathizing heart had ever felt pained, when he first went to college, to see the broad distinction made between the servitors and other collegians. He felt it pain to see them, as, in their plain gowns and caps, they stood or sat apart from their brother students at their meals, but perceived by degrees they were all happy in their rank, being, in general, sons of the poorer and less elevated classes of society, happy to obtain an excellent education free of expense, he had conquered these feelings, and imagined justly that they were in all probability, indifferent to the distinction of rank. But one amongst them had recalled all these kindly sentiments, not only in the heart of Herbert but in that of Percy, who was in general too reckless to regard matters so minutely as his brother The subject of their notice was a young man, perhaps some two or three years older than the heir of Oakwood, but with an expression of melancholy, which frequently amounted almost to anguish, ever stamped on his high and thoughtful brow, and his large, searching, dark gray eye. He was pale, but it appeared more from mental suffering than disease, and at times there was a proud even a

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haughty curl on his lip, that might have whispered he had seen better days. He was never observed to be familiar with his brother servitors, and shrunk with proud humility from the notice of his superiors. The servile offices exacted from those of his degree were performed with scrupulous exactness, but Herbert frequently beheld at such times a flush of suffering mount into his cheek, and when his task was done, he would fold his arms in his gown, and drop his head upon them, as if his spirit revolted in agony from its employment. The other servitors were fond of aping their superiors, by a studied affectation of similar dress and manner, but this young man was never once seen to alter his plain even coarse costume, and kept aloof from all appearance that would assimilate him with those above him; and yet he was their laughing-stock, the butt against which the pointed arrows of scorn, contumely, ridicule, and censure were ever hurled, with a malevolence that appeared strange to the benevolent hearts of the young Hamiltons, who vainly endeavored to check the public torrent. "He was not always as he is now, and then, poor Welshman as he *is*, he always lorded it over us, and we will requite him now," was the only reply they obtained; but the first sentence touched a chord in Herbert's heart. Misfortune might have reduced him to the rank he now held, and perhaps he struggled vainly to teach his spirit submission; but how could he obtain his friendship, in what manner succeed in introducing himself. Herbert was naturally too reserved to make advances, however inclination prompted, and some months passed in inactivity, though the wish to know him, and by kindness remove his despondency, became more and more powerful to the brothers.

A side attack one day on the young Welshman, made with unwonted and bitter sarcasm by an effeminate and luxurious scion of nobility, roused the indignation of Percy. Retorting haughtily on the defensive, a regular war of tongues took place. The masterly eloquence of Percy carried the day, and he hoped young Myrvin was free from all farther attacks He was mistaken: another party, headed by the defeated but enraged Lord, who had been roused to a state of fury by young Hamilton's appearance, surrounded the unhappy young man in the college court, and preventing all egress, heaped every sarcastic insult upon him, words that could not fail to sting his haughty spirit to the quick. Myrvin's eye flashed with sudden and unwonted lustre, and ere Herbert, who with his brother had hastily joined the throng, could prevent it, he had raised his

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arm and felled his insulting opponent to the ground. A wild uproar ensued, the civil officers appeared, and young Myrvin was committed, under the charge of wilfully, and without provocation, attacking the person of the right honorable Marquis of ———

The indignation of Percy and Herbert was now at its height; and without hesitation the former sought the principal of his college, and in a few brief but emphatic sentences, placed the whole affair before him in its true light, condemning with much feeling the cowardly and cruel conduct of the true aggressors, and so convinced the worthy man of the injustice done towards the person of young Myrvin, that he was instantly released, with every honor that could soothe his troubled feelings, and a severe reprimand bestowed on the real authors of the affray.

Percy pursued his advantage; the noble heart of the young Welshman was touched by this generous interference in his behalf, and when the brothers followed him in his solitary walk the following day, he resisted them not. Gratefully he acknowledged the debt he owed them, confessed he would rather have received such a benefit from them than from any others in the college, and at length, unable to resist the frankly proffered friendship of Percy, the silent entreaty of Herbert, he grasped with convulsive pressure their offered hands, and promised faithfully he would avoid them no more. From that hour the weight of his reverses was less difficult to bear. In the society, the conversation of Herbert, he forgot his cares, innate nobleness was visible in Myrvin's every thought, act, and word, and he became dear indeed to the soul of Herbert Hamilton, even as a brother he loved him. Warm, equally warm perhaps, was the mutual regard of Myrvin and Percy, though the latter was not formed for such deep unchanging emotion evinced in the character of his brother. But it was not until some time after the commencement of their friendship that Herbert could elicit from his companion the history of his former life.

It was simply this:—Arthur Myrvin was the only child of the rector of Llangwillan, a small village in Wales, about ten or twelve miles from Swansea. The living was not a rich one, but its emoluments enabled Mr. Myrvin to live in comparative affluence and comfort; beloved, revered by his parishioners, enabled to do good, to bestow happiness, to impart the knowledge of the Christian faith, he beheld his flock indeed walking

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in the paths of their Heavenly Shepherd. He had been enabled by the economy of years to save sufficient to place his son respectably and comfortably at college, and it was with no little pride he looked forward to the time when those savings would be used for their long-destined purpose. Arthur had grown beneath his eye; he had never left his father's roof, and Mr. Myrvin trusted had imbibed principles that would preserve him from the temptations of college life; and so strong was this hope, that he parted from his son without one throb of fear.

The sudden change of his life was, however, too tempting an ordeal for the young man. He associated with those above him both in rank and fortune, who leading him into their extravagant follies, quickly dissipated his allowance, which, though ample, permitted not extravagance. About this time the noble proprietor of the Llangwillan parish died, and its patronage fell to the disposal of a gay and dissipated young man, who succeeded to the large estates. Inordinately selfish, surrounded by ready flatterers, eager of gain, he was a complete tyrant in his domains.

The excessive beauty and fertility of Llangwillan, the industry and simple habits of the inhabitants, excited the desire of possessing it in the mind of one of these humble sycophants, and his point was very speedily gained. Justice and humanity were alike banished from the code of laws now in action, and, without preparation or excuse, Mr. Myrvin was desired to quit that parish which had been his so long. His incumbency expired with the death of the proprietor, and it had been already disposed of. The grief of the old man and his humble friends was long and deep; it was not openly displayed, the lessons of their beloved pastor had too well instructed them in the duty of resignation; but aged cheeks were wet with unwonted tears, and mingled with the sobs of childhood. Men, women, youth, and little children alike wept, when their pastor departed from the village. He who had been the shepherd of his flock so long, was now cast aside as a worthless thing, and the old man's heart was well nigh broken. In a rude cot, forced on his acceptance by a wealthy parishioner, situated some eight or ten miles from the scene of his happiness, he took up his abode, and to him would the villagers still throng each Sabbath, as formerly to the humble church, and old Myrvin, in the midst of his own misfortunes, found time to pray for that misguided and evil-directed man

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who had succeeded him to his ministry, and brought down shame on his profession, and utterly destroyed the peace which which Llangwillan had enjoyed so long.

Resignation by degrees spread over Myrvin's mind, but the conduct of his son caused him fresh anxiety. The news of the change in his father's life awakened Arthur from his lethargy; he saw the folly, the imprudence of which he had been guilty; his father could no longer support him at college. In three years he had squandered away that which, with economy, would have served as maintenance for ten, and now he must leave the college, or do that from which at first his very soul revolted; but the image of his father, his injured father, rose before him. He could not inflict upon him a disappointment so severe as his departure from college would be. He would yet atone for his folly, and fulfil his father's long-cherished hopes, and without consulting him, in a moment of desperation, he sought the resident head of the University, and imparted his wishes. The preliminaries were quickly settled, and the next letter from Oxford which Mr. Myrvin received, contained the intelligence that his son had reconciled his mind to the change, and become a servitor.

A glow of thanksgiving suffused the old man's heart, but he knew all the inward and outward trials with which his son had to contend. Had he at the first joined the college in the rank which he now held, he might not have felt the change so keenly; but as it was, the pride and haughtiness which had characterised him before, were now, as we have seen, returned tenfold upon himself. He clothed himself outwardly in an invulnerable armor of self-control and cold reserve, but inwardly his blood was in one continued fever, until the friendship of Percy and Herbert soothed his troubled feelings. The name of Hamilton, Herbert continued to state, for it was he who wrote particularly of Arthur, the young man had declared he knew well; but where he had heard it, or how, appeared like a dream. He thought he had even seen Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton once not very many years ago; but so many changes in his life had occurred since then, that the particulars of that meeting he could not remember. "Myrvin and Llangwillan appear equally familiar to me," wrote Herbert; "but even more than to Arthur they seem as the remembrances of an indistinct dream. It has sometimes occurred to me that they are combined with the recollection of my aunt Mrs. Fortescue, and Arthur, to whom I mentioned her death, suddenly recalled a dying lady and two

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children, in whom his father was very much interested. For rescue he does not well remember, but the little girl's name was Ellen, a pale, dark-eyed and dark-haired, melancholy child, whom he used to call his wife, and my cousin certainly answers this description. If it be indeed the same, it is strange we should thus come together; and, oh! my dearest father, the benefit our family received from this venerable and injured man, bids me long more intently that we could do something for him, and that Arthur should be restored to his former position. He is of full age, and quite capable of taking orders, and I have often thought, could he reside with Mr. Howard the year previous to his ordination, it would tend much more to his happiness and welfare than remaining here, even if he was released from that grade, the oppression of which now hangs so heavily upon him. Follies have been his, but they have been nobly repented; and something within me whispers that the knowledge he is my dearest and most intimate friend, that we mutually feel we are are of service to each other, will plead his cause and my request to my kind and indulgent father, with even more force than the mere relation of facts, interesting as that alone would be."

He was right. The friend, the chosen and most intimate friend of their younger son would ever have been an object of interest to Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton. That he was the son of the same good man who had acted so benevolently towards Eleanor and her orphan children, who had soothed her dying bed, and reconciled the parting sinner to her Maker, added weight to the simple yet pathetic eloquence with which Herbert had related his story. The injury he had sustained excited their just indignation, and if the benevolence of their kind hearts had required fresh incentives, the unfeigned grief of Ellen, as the tale of the old man was related to her, would have given it.

"Oh, that I had it in my power to offer a sufficient sum to tempt the sordid and selfish being in whose possession Llangwillan now is," she was heard one day to exclaim, when she imagined herself alone, "that I might but restore it to Mr. Myrvin; that I might feel that good old man was passing his latter years in the spot and amongst all those he so much loved; that Arthur could break the chain that now so bitterly and painfully distresses him. Dear, dear Mr. Myrvin, oh, how little did I imagine, when my thoughts have wandered to you and Arthur, who was such a dear consoling friend in my child

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ish sorrow, that misery such as this had been your portion; and I can do nothing, nothing to prove how often I have thought of and loved you both—and my dear mother's grave, in the midst of strangers." And she wept bitterly, little imagining her soliloquy had been overheard by her aunt and uncle, who were almost surprised at her vivid remembrance of those whom for the last seven years she had scarcely seen, and of whom she so seldom heard; but it heightened their desire to be of service to him who had once been so kind a friend to their family.

The contents of Percy's letter, to the rather alarming and mysterious nature of which we have already alluded, will be found in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

"MALISON, dear Malison, congratulate me; the game is in my own hands!" exclaimed Miss Grahame one morning as she entered the private room of her confidant, about a week after the receipt of the letters we have mentioned, with every feature expressing triumphant yet malignant glee.

"That has been the case some weeks, has it not?" replied Miss Malison.

"Yes; but not so completely as at present. Caroline has just left me; she was afraid of imparting in writing the important intelligence she had to give me, important indeed, for it saves me a world of trouble; though did I allow myself to think on her present condition of suffering, I believe that I should repent her perfect and innocent confidence in me. Her defence of my character, whenever it is attacked, almost touches my heart; but her mother, her intrusive mother, that would-be paragon of her sex, rises before me, and continually urges me on; she shall learn, to her cost, that her carefully-trained children are not better than others."

"She has learned it partly already, by your account," remarked Miss Malison, concealing under a calm exterior her detestation of Mrs. Hamilton.

"She has. That rejection of St. Eval assisted me most agreeably; I did not expect that Caroline's own spirit and self-will would have aided me so effectually. That disappointment with St. Eval has affected Mrs. Hamilton more deeply than she chooses to make visible. Her coldness and severity to-

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wards her child spring from her own angry and mortified feelings: however, she lays it to the score of Caroline's faulty conduct, and my friendly letters have happily convinced Caroline such is the case. In my most sanguine expectations of triumph, I never imgined I should succeed so well in severing the link between Mrs. Hamilton and her daughter. Confidence is utterly at an end between them, and that would be sufficient to gratify any one but myself; but my vengeance for the prejudice and dislike with which this perfect creature regards me must be more fully satisfied, at present it is only soothed. Now you know, *chère* Malison, you are dying with curiosity to hear what new assistance has started up; a little more patience and you shall know all. You are aware with what bitter and resentful feelings Caroline regards the treatment she receives from her parents, and also from Emmeline, child as she is."

"Perfectly; nor do I wonder at it. In this case the immaculate Mrs. Hamilton does not appear to practise what she preaches. It is rather wonderful, that one who says so much about gentle treatment doing more good than harshness, should now make her own child suffer beneath her severity."

"As I said before, Malison, her severity is but a disguise for mortification and annoyance. Lord St. Eval, the heir of the Malvern peerage, was too good a chance to be thrown away without vexation. Caroline was a silly fool to act as she did, I must say that for her, grateful as I ought to be for the assistance that foolish act has given me. As for rejecting him merely for love of Alphingham, it is a complete farce. She no more loves the Viscount than I do; perhaps not so much. I make her believe she does, and so I intend to do till my plan is fully accomplished; but love him as she would have done, as in all probability, at the present moment, she loves Lord St. Eval, she does not and never will. I shall make a fashionable pair, but not a love match, Malison, believe me."

"That Mrs. Hamilton may have the exquisite pleasure of seeing her daughter like other people, however different she may choose to be herself; you will rather do her a kindness than an injury, my dear Miss Grahame."

"Fortunately for my purpose, she will not think so. I shall, through Caroline, inflict a deeper wound than I ever thought to have done. No other injury would have touched her; she prides herself on Christian forbearance and patience, and such like, which, simply translated, would be found to be

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nothing but haughtiness and pride, and utter insensibility to human feelings; but if Caroline goes wrong, elopes, perhaps, as her aunt did, disregards parental commands, and acts in the weighty affair of matrimony for herself, why that will be something like a triumph for my diplomatic schemes."

"You must work well on Caroline's mind to produce such a consummation," observed Miss Malison. "I doubt much whether she would ever act in a manner that she would believe so contrary to her duty. I would advise you never to give her time to reflect."

"I never mean to do so. If the silly girl had ever reflected at all, she would at once have known that she loved St. Eval and not Lord Alphingham; that her mother is her truest friend, and not Annie Grahame; but as she chooses to remain so stupidly blind and trusting, why I see no harm in playing my part, and as for her consenting, let her but hear the honorable Viscount's sweet persuasive eloquence, and look on his handsome and pleading features, and consent will quickly be obtained."

"But why should he not demand her at once of her father? Mr. Hamilton is always friendly with him when they meet."

"You have just hit the mark, *ma chère*. That very truth was always a stumbling-block in my machinations, for I almost feared, by Mr. Hamilton's manner towards him, that the interesting tales concerning his youth, which I had intended should be poured into his wife's ear, might be disregarded; such from the first had been my intention, but I have felt puzzled in a degree how to set about it."

"Nay, you do yourself injury, my dearest Miss Grahame," observed the ex-governess, officiously. "From your earliest years you were never puzzled at any thing"

"My wits deserted me then for the moment," replied Annie, laughing, "and would perhaps have returned when my plot was ripe for execution; but I am happy to say I can dispense with their assistance, as I have received it most effectually from a member of Mr. Hamilton's own family."

"How!" exclaimed Miss Malison, much astonished.

"Even so, *ma chère;* and now we come to the important intelligence Caroline brought me this morning. It appears, that last week Mr. Hamilton received a letter from Percy, which by her account must have contained some mysterious warning against this very Lord Alphingham, that his attentions to Caroline had been not only remarked, but reported to

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him, and conjuring his father, as he valued Caroline's future peace, to dismiss him at once and peremptorily. Thus much Mr. Hamilton imparted to his daughter, a few days after the receipt of this letter, and after bestowing some little approbation on her conduct towards him, which you know before her parents is always particularly cold and guarded, he requested, or rather desired, that she would gradually withdraw herself entirely from his society, as he had received quite sufficient confirmation of that letter to render him anxious to break off all further communication and acquaintance with him. Caroline is such a simpleton, I wonder she could prevent her countenance from betraying her as she spoke; but I suppose she did, for Mr. Hamilton expressed himself satisfied by her assurance that his wishes should not be forgotten. Whether this letter contains other and more explicit matter she does not know, but her state of mind is miserable enough to touch any heart that is not quite so steeled as mine. I could almost smile at her fond belief that she really loves him, for I see my own work, no tender passion as she imagines; and to break off all intercourse with him appears comparative torture. I have already convinced her of her father's injustice and cruelty in acting thus capriciously towards one so well known and so universally honored, and merely from a mysterious and unsatisfactory letter from a boy who knows nothing about the matter. I hinted very broadly, that it was only because her parents were provoked at her rejection of St. Eval; and as they still had a lingering hope he would return, they did not choose her to receive attentions from any one else. I saw her eyes flash and her cheek crimson with indignation against all who had thus injured her; and she declared, with more vehemence than I expected, that neither father nor mother, nor Percy, should prevent her choosing a husband for herself. A violent burst of tears succeeded this speech; but I continued to soothe and console her, and she left me with a spirit vowed and determined to free herself from such galling tyranny. And what do you think had been her mood when she first came to me?"

Miss Malison, as expected, expressed ignorance.

"Why, the weak simpleton thought of confessing her whole tale of love to her mother, and imploring comfort and assistance."

"Take care she does not do so still," remarked Miss Malison

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"Not she. I have proved too clearly how ridiculous and miserable she would make herself by such a *dénouement*. Her mother, I said, instead of pitying, would assuredly condemn her for all the past, and most probably convey her at once to Oakwood, and immure her there till Lord St. Eval came to release her. She was both terrified and indignant at the idea."

"No wonder she should be; but do you know if she or her father have seen Lord Alphingham since the arrival of this letter?"

"But once, last night; and it was the fancied anguish felt for his distress, which she was unable, as usual, to soothe, in consequence of the keen *surveillance* of her mother, that brought her here this morning to tell me all. Mr. Hamilton was still courteous, but more distant. I have convinced her, that as her parents no longer treat her with confidence, she has no right to treat them with any; and as every one knows the worthy character of the Viscount, she can be doing nothing wrong in proving to him that her feelings in his favor are unchanged. She has hinted to me to explain the situation in which she is placed, but *entre nous*, I mean to do no such thing, for I have a plan of my own to follow up. She is not aware how very intimate I am with the Viscount, and how much he confides in me; all my persuasions will tend to urge him to ask her of her father, and I am sure nothing can be more honorable than that course of action."

"Nothing, I am sure," echoed the conscientious confidant; "but how will that assist your former scheme?"

"Most admirably. Mr. Hamilton will, of course, decidedly refuse his consent, without even consulting his daughter; the anger of Lord Alphingham will be overpowering; rage against the father, and love for the daughter will urge him to any and every means to obtain her hand. Caroline's indignation against her father for acting in this way and treating her so much like a child, feelings which I shall take care to create and foster, will second his eloquence, and I feel quite certain that next season Caroline Hamilton mingles in the most fashionable circles as the Viscountess Alphingham; and to obtain such a triumphant end, in my opinion, no means are faulty."

"Most assuredly not. Not only the young lady herself, but her whole family ought to be eternally grateful, for without such manœuvring I doubt much whether the perfect daughter or the self-satisfied mother would obtain an establishment in

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all things so desirable. Enraged as she will be at first at such unexpected conduct in the child she has so ill-treated, she will thank you in the end, Miss Grahame, depend upon it."

"If I thought so, Malison, on my honor, I should feel disinclined to proceed one step further in the business. Give her cause to thank me, feel that I have unwittingly been of service to her whom of her whole sex I hate the most, to one who from my earliest years I know regarded me with aversion and contempt; Malison, I would draw back on the instant did I think so. But no, it will not, it shall not be; the life of her child as Countess of Alphingham will not be such as to bring peace to Mrs. Hamilton's heart: to some mothers it might, but not to hers. She shall behold in this marriage the complete failure of her plans, the utter wreck of all her exclusive notions; she shall see that her pretended goodness and Christian example are not exemplified in Caroline at least. She shall feel my power—aye, bitterly. Thus will I triumph—in Caroline's disobedience will I be avenged for the contempt and dislike her mother has ever shown to me."

She suddenly raised her slight figure to its full height, and looked on her companion with a countenance expressive of such malignant triumph, that all, save her companion in iniquity, must have shuddered as they beheld such youthful features so deformed. Some other conversation passed between her and her able confidant, but as little more was said on the subject most interesting to us, we will not follow them further. Annie's evil schemes are already too clearly displayed; her mind, unable as Miss Malison's to comprehend the exalted nature of Mrs. Hamilton's character, looked upon it with detestation; the more so, as feeling she was ever *acting*—she believed it hypocrisy; that the worth for which even those who visited her not, gave her credit, was not her real character, but an artful veil to conceal evil qualities. The quick penetration of Miss Grahame had even in childhood discovered that she was no favorite, and accustomed to be spoiled and flattered by all with whom she associated, her indignation and dislike towards the only one who would dare treat her differently, look on her as a mere child, rendered ridiculous by affectation, increased with her years. She soon discovered the influence she possessed over Caroline, and on that, knowing also her faults, she determined to work, and thus effectually destroy the peace of a mother devoted to her children, and prove to the world that the eccentric seclusion of Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton for their

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children's benefit was productive of no more good, if as much, as the plain and in her eyes only useful plan of fashionable education.

In her first scheme she had already succeeded more than she was perhaps conscious. The affair of St. Eval had clearly and painfully proved to Mr. Hamilton that the fears of his wife the night of Caroline's introduction—those anxious fears, were indeed well founded. She had sunk beneath temptation; integrity and honor, and every better feeling had been overcome by that inordinate love of power which her mother from the first had seen and dreaded. The father's heart was pained and disappointed, not only in this, but that his Caroline now was not the same as she had been at Oakwood. A change had come over her, and darkening her spirit, rendered her conduct at home gloomy, distrustful, and uneasy; the irritability of her childhood had returned, her very conversation appeared restrained, and since the departure of Lord St. Eval, her cheek had become pale, and her eye no longer sparkling; and only in the excitement of society her parents beheld her as formerly. Mr. Hamilton was deeply grieved, but he knew not, guessed not the extent of his wife's anguish. She saw every foreboding fear fulfilled; the confidence of her child was entirely withheld from her; the coldness with which she felt compelled to treat her disregard of her wishes had, she felt assured, completely alienated her affection. Caroline could no longer love her; every week, every day proved, by a hundred minute circumstances, her affection was fleeting, and her mother despairingly felt, never to return; and yet she had but done her duty, exercised her natural authority to lead her erring child in the better way. Her firm unshrinking discipline in childhood had only bound the cords of affection between herself and her offspring more firmly together; but now in the case of Caroline it appeared about to snap them asunder. Her fond heart yearned constantly towards her daughter, but she would not give way, for the sake of Emmeline and Ellen, whose efforts vied with each other to increase the comfort and happiness of her they so dearly loved. Their affection, their confidence, would not change, no, however her authority might interfere with their wishes; and should she become repining and gloomy, because there was one source of sorrow amidst so many blessings, her pious heart struggled for submission, and obtained it. But Caroline guessed not the deep pang she had inflicted; she knew not the many tears

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shed in secret, the many inward prayers offered up for her that however severe was her chastening, it might be blessed and bring her back to the deserted fold, to the bosom of her mother. She knew not this, nor was Annie conscious how fearfully her plans had succeeded in inflicting pain.

The very cheerfulness of Mrs. Hamilton, striven for as it was, the unwavering kindness of her manner towards Emmeline and Ellen, increased the irritability of Caroline, and with it her indignation at her mother's coldness and severity towards herself. She felt she was indeed a slave, and longed to throw aside that galling bondage. What right had her mother to treat her thus? Why must her every action be controlled, her very friendship disapproved of? She, felt she was the injured one, and therefore allowed herself no thought for her whom she in truth had injured. For the same reason she clung yet closer to Annie; in her alone, in her present state of mind, she found full sympathy, and yet even with her she was not happy, there was a strange indefinable sensation in her heart that even to her friend she could not express. There was a void within, a deep yearning void, which tortured her in her solitary moments, which even the society of Lord Alphingham could not wholly remove. In solitude she blindly taught herself to believe that void must be for him. How far she erred a future page must tell.

Her conduct in society meanwhile, since the departure of St. Eval, had been guarded and reserved, and her parents fondly trusting their displeasure had been of service, relaxed after the first fortnight in their coldness and mistrustful manner towards her. Mrs. Hamilton had hoped the pale cheek and dim eye proceeded from remorse; and had not Caroline been so pointedly distant and reserved when in her society, she would have lavished on her all the tenderness of former years.

When that mysterious letter from Percy came, although it caused his parents considerable anxiety, yet it never once occurred that any coldness on their part towards Lord Alphingham could occasion Caroline any pain. Percy wrote with a degree of eloquent earnestness that could not be resisted, and guarded as his information and caution was, Mr. Hamilton determined implicitly to abide by it. The young man wrote what Annie had informed Miss Malison; that he had heard from more than one quarter of Lord Alphingham's marked attentions to his sister, that he had even been congratulated on the brilliant alliance Caroline was about to make. He did not,

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he could not believe that such was the case, he said, for he should then have heard it from his parents, but he conjured his father, however casual the Viscount's attentions might be, to withdraw Caroline entirely from them.

"I know well," he wrote. "Father, as you value my sister's future peace, expose her not to his many fascinations. If he has endeavored to win her heart, if he has paid her marked attentions, he is a villain! I dare not be more explicit, I am pledged to silence, and only to you, my dear father. and on such an emergency, am I privileged to write thus much. Desire Caroline to give him no more encouragement, however slight; but do not tell even this, it may not only alarm her, but be imparted perhaps to her friend, as young ladies are fond of doing. You have once said I never deceived you; father, trust me now, this is no jest; my sister's happiness is too dear to me. Break off all connection with Lord Alphingham. I give no credit to the rumors I have heard, for your letters this season bade me hope Lord St. Eval would have been my sister's choice. His departure from England has dispelled these visions; but yet Caroline's affections cannot have been given to Lord Alphingham without your or my mother's knowledge. Again I implore you, associate no more with him, he is not worthy of my father's friendship."

Mysterious as this was, yet both Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton knew Percy too well to imagine he would write thus without strong cause. The suspicions and almost unconscious prejudice entertained towards him by Mrs. Hamilton received confirmation by this letter, and she was pleased that her husband determined no longer to encourage his intimacy. Percy wrote, if he had paid Caroline marked attentions, or endeavored to win her heart, he was a villain, and he had done so, and Mrs. Hamilton could not but feel sufficiently rejoiced at Caroline's apparent manner towards him. Deceived as she had been, yet that her once honorable child should so entirely forget the principles of her childhood, as to give him secret encouragement, while her conduct in society rather bespoke indifference and pride than pleasure, that Caroline could have been led to act thus was a thing so morally impossible to Mrs. Hamilton, that she had no hesitation whatever in complying with Percy's request, little imagining that in doing so she placed an inseparable bar to her regaining the confidence of her child, and widened more painfully the breach between them.

Caroline's heart, on receiving her father's command to with

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draw herself by degrees entirely from Lord Alphingham, was wrung with many bitter and contending feelings. At first she reproached herself for having thus completely concealed her feelings, and, had she followed the impulse of nature, she would at once have thrown herself on her mother's neck, and there confessed all, that she loved him; that she had long done so, and implore her not to check their intercourse without some explicit reason: but Annie's evil influence had been too powerful. She dreaded her reproaches on this want of confidence in herself, or, what was still worse, her satirical smile at her ridiculous weakness, and then she remembered her mother's displeasure at her former conduct, and dreaded a renewal of the same coldness, perhaps even increased control. She determined, therefore, to wait till she had seen Annie; and that interview rendered her more miserable, excited still more her indignaion against her parents and brother, and strengthened the feelings of devoted affection with which she fancied she regarded Lord Alphingham. Annie's continued notes confirmed these feelings; under the specious intention of soothing Caroline's wounded pride, it was very easy for her to disguise her repeated insinuations of Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton's injustice and caprice towards the Viscount, and tyranny towards herself. The veil she had thrown over Caroline's sober judgment became thicker and more blinding, and Caroline could sometimes scarcely restrain even before her parents the indignation which so continually filled her heart.

Mrs. Hamilton was ignorant of the communications that were so constantly passing between Annie and her daughter, or she might perhaps have put a stop to them. Caroline's own maid, Fanny, had been persuaded to become the means of receiving and sending their intelligence in secret. The conscience of the girl reproached her more than once, but the idea was so improbable that Miss Caroline could act improperly, that she continued faithful to her wishes, even against her better judgment.

Lord Alphingham's ready penetration was puzzled at the change of manner in both Mr. Hamilton and his daughter. The latter, he could easily perceive, was constrained to act thus, and his determination to release her from such thraldom became more strongly fixed within him. He became as cold and reserved to her father as Mr. Hamilton had been to him; but his silent yet despairing glances ever turned towards Caroline were, he felt assured, quite enough to rivet his influence more

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closely around her. The following morning, as Annie had expected, the Viscount sought her to give vent to his fears about Caroline; his indignation against the unaccountable alteration in Mr. Hamilton's manner. What could have caused it? He had ever acted honorably and nobly, openly marked his preference, and he had talked himself into a passion, before his companion offered to give him any advice or speak any comfort.

"They are either determined their daughter shall not marry whom she likes, in revenge for her not accepting whom they selected, or they are resolved, by this studied display of coldness, to bring you to a point, so I advise you to speak to this stern, capricious father at once."

"And what good will that do?"

"A good deal, if you manœuvre properly, on which quality you fortunately require no lessens from me. You will, at least, discover Mr. Hamilton's intentions. If he receive you, well and good, you should be flattered at his condescension; if the contrary, you will, at least, know on what ground you stand, and the situation in which my poor friend must be placed. She is worried to death with the continual caprices of mamma and papa. It would be a charity in any one to break the chains in which she is held. She came to me yesterday in the deepest distress, and all from caprice; for what else can it be that has changed Mr. Hamilton's manner?"

Lord Alphingham's fancy became more and more warmed as she spoke; vanity and self-love were alike gratified, and he answered eagerly—

"I may depend, then, on her affections; she will not, for fear of mamma, play me false?"

"Not she; that is to say, if you do not betray her in your eagerness to ask her of her father. You have never yet asked the question, though you have discovered she loves you; but if, in demanding her of her father, you say you have gained her affections, the consequence will be, if Mr. Hamilton refuse her, she will be borne instantly to Oakwood, and there imprisoned, till the poor girl pines and droops like a chained bird without hope of freedom. Whereas, if you will only govern your impetuous temper, and trust to her affections and my friendship, your every wish may be gratified, with or without Mr. Hamilton's advice."

"And you will assist us;—adorable girl! how can we ever repay you?" he exclaimed, raising her hand passionately to his lips. The cheek of Annie suddenly blanched, but a cold proud

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smile curled her lip. She answered him in his own spirit, and after a prolonged interview, the viscount departed to act on her advice.

Ere that day closed, Lord Alphingham had sought Mr. Hamilton, and with every demonstration of respectful yet passionate affection, solicited his consent to address his daughter. The warning of his son, the strong term he had used, were engraved on Mr. Hamilton's mind, and scarcely could he answer the Viscount with his accustomed calmness. Politely but decidedly he refused, adding, that he had hoped the constant reserve of Caroline's manner would at once have convinced him of her feelings, and spared him the pain of refusing for her the honorable alliance Lord Aphingham proposed. A haughty and somewhat triumphant smile played for a second on the Viscount's lips, but Mr. Hamilton understood not its import; and his companion, with many expressions of wounded feeling and injured honor, departed, leaving Mr. Hamilton rather pleased than otherwise at this affair, as it gave him a plausible excuse for withdrawing entirely from his society. He imparted what had passed to his wife, and both agreed it was better for Caroline to say nothing of his proposals; and this determination, for once, was not thwarted by Annie, who thought it better for Lord Alphingham to plead his own cause at some future time, when the idea of his having been refused without consulting her, the person principally concerned, would excite yet greater indignation towards her parents, and assist effectually the cause of her lover, who leaving town for a week or two to prove to Mr. Hamilton his wounded feelings were no pretence, or for some other reason, left to Annie the charge of preparing Caroline's mind for the alternative he might propose.

A circumstance happened about this time, which appeared greatly to favor the schemes of Annie and Lord Alphingham, and expose Caroline more powerfully to temptation. The Duchess of Rothbury had invited a select number of friends to wile away the remaining weeks of the London season at her elegant seat, which was situated in a lovely spot, about twenty miles from the metropolis. Amongst the number she, of course, included Mrs. Hamilton, and expressed herself very much disappointed when that lady tendered excuses. Mr. Hamilton could not leave town; he had put Mr. Myrvin's case into the hands of an able solicitor, and wished to remain on the spot himself to urge on the business, that it might be completed before he returned to Oakwood. It was not likely, he

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said, that the affair would occupy much time, the whole circumstance being directly illegal. It had only been the age and poverty, combined with the shrinking sensitiveness from public gaze, which had prevented Mr. Myrvin from coming forward at the very first against his persecutor. A specious tale had been brought forward to excuse the illegality, and impose on the bishop in whose diocese Llangwillan was situated, and Myrvin, though he could meet trials with resignation, was too broken-hearted to resist them. Thus much Mr. Hamilton had learned from Arthur, to whom he wrote himself, requesting him to give a minute account of the whole circumstance. His earnestness, seconded by the entreaties of both his sons, succeeded in banishing Arthur's proud reserve, and Mr. Hamilton was now engaged heart and soul in his benevolent scheme of exposing iniquity, and restoring the injured clergyman to his grieving flock. He could not, therefore, leave London, and Mrs. Hamilton who, for mere amusement, could not bear to part from her children, for only Caroline was to accompany her, steadily resisted the entreaties of her friend. For herself she was firm, but she hesitated when the Duchess, seconded by her daughters, requested most persuadingly, that if she would not come herself, she would, at least, permit Caroline to join them.

"You have known me so long, that I have the vanity to believe, that if I promise to guard your child as if she were my own, you will trust her with me," her grace urged, with a pertinacity that could not fail to be flattering. "She will be as safe under my care as were she under the observance of her mother."

"That I do not doubt one moment," replied Mrs. Hamilton, earnestly; "if I hesitated, it was from no doubt of either your grace's care or kindness. If Caroline be willing to accept your invitation, and her father consent, she has my permission."

"Thank you, my good friend; I trusted in my eloquence to prevail," the Duchess said, smiling with an air of sincerity that gratified Mrs. Hamilton; and she quickly imparted to Caroline the accepted invitation, but in vain endeavored to read on the face of her child whether she were pleased or otherwise. Circumstances which caused Mrs. Hamilton rather to rejoice at Caroline's absence from London for a time, were to the latter great preventives to the enjoyment to which, in such elegant society, she might otherwise have looked for

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ward. Annie Grahame was, much to her own vexation, excluded from this select circle. The Duchess had penetrated her designing character, and regarded her with a prejudice, as violent as was her nature. She was only invited to those large assemblies which included all her acquaintances, not merely her friends. Amazed at this slight, Miss Grahame at once determined that there the catastrophe for which she had so long planned should take place, and her detestation of Mrs. Hamilton be gratified to the uttermost.

Would Lord Alphingham be there? was a question that crossed Caroline's mind repeatedly, and was as often demanded of her friend. Annie either would not or could not tell; and she would add, perhaps she ought to congratulate Caroline on her separation from him, as such a dread mandate had gone from her parent, and she surely would not wish to encourage his society; and then she would implore her forgiveness, and sympathize so well in her fancied distress, and describe that of Lord Alphingham in such heightened colors, that Caroline, unsophisticated as in some things she still was, felt truly miserable. The Viscount's sudden departure from town would have been unaccountable, had not Annie succeeded in persuading her that she was sure it was entirely owing to her (Caroline's) coldness and Mr. Hamilton's unaccountable conduct.

Mr. Hamilton did not at first approve of his daughter leaving home without her mother, even to visit the Duchess of Rothbury, but he yielded to the solicitations of his wife. They knew that Lord Alphingham was somewhat of a favorite with the Duke, but felt so assured that the heart of their child was entirely disengaged, at least to him, that on his account they did not hesitate. Caroline's conduct with regard to St. Eval had, they were convinced, proceeded from the pure love of coquetry; they could not believe she had rejected him because she fancied she loved another, they had had no cause to do so: and since Mrs. Hamilton had spoken so seriously on the subject, Caroline's behavior in public had been such as to excite their approbation, and renew, in some measure, their confidence in her integrity. She was more reserved, and her manner to the Viscount, when they chanced to meet, had led them trustingly to believe their commands on this head would be implicitly obeyed. Perhaps Mrs. Hamilton's penetration had played her false; it was strange that a mother so long accustomed to divine the thoughts and feelings of her children,

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should have been thus blind to the emotions with which Caroline believed she regarded Lord Alphingham. But, surely, no farther proof than this was wanting to clearly demonstrate it was not true love she felt; had it been that real, pure, fervid passion, could one so unused to art have concealed the flushing cheek, the sparkling eye, the trembling voice, which would invariably have betrayed her? No; it was infatuation,—blind, maddening infatuation,—strengthened by indignation towards her parents; by the wish to prove she could throw off their control, and choose for herself, and love whom and where and how she liked, without their choice and sympathy; and it was thus she completely veiled her feelings. Can we condemn her mother for refusing to believe the child she had trained and watched, and prayed for so long, such an adept in deceit? Can we blame her want of penetration in this instance, and think it unnatural in her character, when we remember how completely the character of her child was changed? Surely not. It would have been stranger had she, without proof, believed Caroline the girl she had really become.

The reflection that she could still write to Annie and hear from her, consoled her for the temporary separation; and she joined the Duchess with some degree of pleasure, which had, however, been slightly alloyed by a conversation with her mother before she left home. Her spirit was in too excitable a state to hear advice calmly. Every word Mrs. Hamilton so gently said on her conduct being more guarded now than when under her eye, her mild entreaties that for her sake Caroline would behave with reserve, all fell on a poisoned ear. Sullenly she listened, and when her mother bade her farewell, it was with a heart grieving bitterly. While smarting under supposed injuries, how little did Caroline imagine the real agony she inflicted on her mother. If the gentle heart of Mrs. Hamilton had been wrung by the wayward conduct of her sister, how much more so must it have been wounded, when she saw so many of those evil qualities reflected in her child.

At Airslie, so the residence of the Duchess of Rothbury was called, Caroline found herself universally courted. She knew she was admired, and she was flattered; but there was a ceaseless gnawing at her heart, which not even gratified vanity could still. She knew not, would not know, it was remorse. She believed it was the conduct of her parents; the chain that was thrown round her actions, her disappointment with regard to Lord Alphingham; for he was not, as in secret

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she hoped he would be, one of the invited guests. It was a task, a painful task, to write home, but she forced herself to speak of the scenes around, and sketch, with a masterly hand, some of the characters with whom she mingled; and her parents strove to be satisfied, though there was somewhat wanting in those letters which, when Caroline had been from home, they had never missed before.

"So that man of learning, that marvellous prodigy, that walking cyclopædia, Lord St. Eval, has absolutely deserted us, to bury himself in Italy or Switzerland. Miss Hamilton, can you explain so wonderful and puzzling an enigma?" mischievously demanded Lord Henry D'Este, one day, as he found himself alone near Caroline. His friend's departure had indeed been to him a riddle, and believing at length that it must have originated in her caprice, he determined, whenever he had an opportunity, to revenge St. Eval by doing all in his power to torment her. A deep blush overspread Caroline's cheeks as he spoke, for except that Mary Greville's letters had mentioned him, he was never spoken of at home.

"It ought not to appear a very puzzling riddle to you," she answered quickly. "He has gone, I should imagine, to collect fresh matters for reflection, that he may better deserve the title you have bestowed upon him."

"Nay, nay, surely he has enough of such matters to form four and twenty good folio volumes," answered Lord Henry, laughing. The art of politeness he certainly has failed to retain, for you can have no idea what a *brusque* philosopher he is. I assure you, he terrified me the last time I saw him. What your honorable father had done to him I know not, but I met him just coming from Berkely Square, and all the charms he had lately invited around him had suddenly departed, he was a different man, and that day, in a fit, I suppose, of spleen, he quits London, and the next time I hear of him he is in Geneva: that noble Lord is one of the strangest creatures I ever had the honor to know. However, perhaps he has visited the Continent to learn politeness, and I think he may chance to learn a lesson of love also. Not at all unlikely, by the praises he bestows in his letters on a certain Louisa Manvers."

In vain Caroline struggled to prevent a start, or her cheek from suddenly paling. "Louisa Manvers," she repeated, almost unconsciously.

"Yes, do you know her? by the bye, she must be some dis

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tant connection of yours, I fancy; her brother is Lord Del mont, he inherited the title from your maternal grandfather. St. Eval and Delmont were college chums, and, though they are parted, retain all the romantic enthusiasm of friendship. After spending some little time with your friends I believe, at Geneva, the lone pilgrim bent his steps to Lago Guardia, and there he has remained, wooing nature with his friend, and in all probability playing the *dévoué* to Miss Manvers. We shall find Lord St. Eval bringing home a fair Italian bride, before we are aware of it; that is to say, if she will have the courage to pore through the deep and hidden treasures of this volume, till she comes to the magic word heart.

He might have continued, for Caroline, buried in her own miserable thoughts, interrupted him not. Had she encountered the eyes of Lord Henry, as they were fixed full of mischief upon her, she might have made some effort to rouse herself, but as it was, she felt relieved and glad when their *tête-à-tête* was interrupted by the entrance of a merry group, just returned in the highest spirits from exploring a thick and mazy wood in the vicinity of the extensive grounds.

"Good news for all," exclaimed the Duke of Rothbury, entering directly after; "we are to have another guest to-day, to keep us all alive."

"Who—who?" was reiterated by many voices, with somewhat of the noisy mirth of children.

"No less a person than Viscount Alphingham." An exclamation of pleasure passed through the giddy crowd, but there was an expression in the countenance of the Duchess, who had also entered from a drive, which, to Caroline's quickly awakened fancy, appeared contrary to the general emotion. "He is engaged as Sir Walter Courtenay's guest, so I cannot claim him as mine," the Duke continued; "but that does not much signify. Sir Walter is here every day, and Alphingham will of course accompany him. He is the best fellow I know."

"And this is the man papa, for no reason whatever, save from Percy's ill-natured opinion, has desired me to slight, to behave in a manner that, contrasted with former notice, must be madness itself; cruelty to him, after what has passed between us, and misery to me. Surely, in such a case as this I am not compelled to obey. When the general voice proclaims him other than they believe, am I to regard what is in itself a mystery? If Percy had good reasons for writing against him

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to papa, for I am sure he must have done so, why did he not explain them, instead of treating me thus like a child, and standing forward as his accuser, when the whole world extols him? Why are the dearest wishes of my heart to be destroyed merely by caprice? Percy ever tried, even in childhood, to bid me to look up to him, and acknowledge his power, and thus he would prove it, but he will find himself mistaken. When papa permits his judgment to be blinded by the insinuations of a mere boy, I no longer consider myself bound to obey him."

Such was the tenor of Caroline's thoughts when alone, in the short interval, ere she descended to dinner—there was no ray of happiness; her heart had that day received a wound, nor could she derive comfort even from the knowledge that Lord Alphingham was expected. She would not permit herself to think on Lord Henry's conversation. What was it to her if St. Eval married Louisa Manvers? then studiously she thought only on the Viscount, and the situation with regard to him in which she was placed, till her head ached with the intensity of its reflections.

On entering the drawing-room she found, as she had anticipated, Lord Alphingham the centre of a brilliant coterie, and for the space of a minute her heart throbbed and her cheek flushed. He bowed respectfully as she appeared, but with distant courtesy; yet she fancied the flow of his eloquence was for a moment arrested, and his glance, subdued yet so mournfully beseeching, spoke volumes. Neither at dinner nor during the whole of that evening did he pay her more than ordinary attention; scarcely that. But those silent signals of intelligence had even greater power than words; for they flattered her self-love, by clearly proving, that courted, admired, as she could not but feel he was by all around him, his noble hostess perhaps excepted, yet all was as nothing, now that her favor had been so strangely and suddenly withdrawn. His tone, his manner, as he presented to her a note from Annie, of which he had been the bearer, strengthened this illusion; and Caroline as she retired to rest, felt more and more convinced they were indeed mutually and devotedly attached, and that her obedience to her parents could not weigh against the duty she owed herself, the love he had evinced for her. Annie's note strengthened this determination.

"I give you joy, my dear Caroline," she wrote, "on the opportunity you will now enjoy of receiving Lord Alphing

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ham's attentions, undisturbed by any of those wayward fancies which have lately so destroyed your peace. Do not, for heaven's sake, by squeamish notions of filial obedience and dutiful conduct—which I do assure you have been very long out of date—destroy your own happiness. When parents cease to care for the true welfare and felicity of their children, it becomes our positive duty to care for them ourselves. Mr. Hamilton has given you no reason for his command to withdraw yourself from the attentions of Lord Alphingham; and surely that is the clearest imaginable proof that he really has none to give, and that it is merely to gratify his own unjust displeasure at your rejection of St. Eval, as if in such matters you had not an undoubted right to decide for yourself. He cannot suppose that you will now be contented with that which completely crosses your own wishes, merely because he desires it. That was all very well in your childhood, but at present, when your own reason must be satisfied, he has no right to expect obedience. The whole conduct of your parents, you have owned to me yourself, has been lately such as to alienate your affection and confidence. They hold your will enchained my poor friend; and if you have not the spirit to break it, now a fair opportunity occurs, forgive me, if I say I can no longer offer you consolation. Lord Alphingham loves you, and long ere this, had it not been for your mother's extraordinary conduct, would have proposed, and you might have been now a plighted bride, or still happier wife. I much doubt, by a few hints he dropped, if his late departure from town was not occasioned by Mr. Hamilton's positive refusal to sanction his addresses to you. If he has demanded your hand, and been rejected without your knowledge, your father and mother have treated you with much confidence and affection, have they not? Can they, dare they expect to receive yours, when such is the case? Is it not a clear proof your happiness is not to be consulted in any marriage you may form? It is ridiculous to imagine that your mother has not penetrated, in some degree, your feelings for Alphingham, though perhaps not to their extent; and not approving of it, for no reason whatever, she desires you to shun his society. Your father refuses a most honorable offer, without even consulting the person principally concerned.—Caroline, my dearest friend, do not permit your noble spirit to be thus bowed down. Whatever alternative Lord Alphingham may propose becomes lawful, when you are thus

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cruelly persecuted. Many secret marriages are happier, very much happier, than those for which the consent of parents have been obtained. They think only of ambition, interest; how can we expect them to enter into the warmth of youthful feelings? Do not be frightened at my words, but give them a calm, just deliberation. You have permitted your love for him to be discovered; it becomes your duty to prove it still more clearly."

Such were the principal contents of Annie's letter, more than sufficient to confirm Caroline's already half-adopted resolution, and convince her wavering judgment that obedience to her parents was now no longer a duty; their unjust harshness had alienated her from them, and she must stand forth and act alone. Conscience loudly called on her to desist; that she was deserting the plain path, and entering the labyrinth of deceit, but the words of Annie were before her. Again and again they were read, till every word became engraved within her, and the spirit they breathed thickened the film before her eyes, and deafened her ear to every loudly-whispered reproach. Yet in silence and solitude that still small voice, conscience, arose and left its pang, although on the instant banished.

A few days passed, and the conduct of the Viscount to Caroline continued the same as it had been the first night. Publicly distant, secretly and silently beseeching, with an eloquence few could have resisted. There was a grand *fête* and *déjeûner* at Airslie, which was pronounced by the connoisseurs in such things to be the most *recherché* of the season. But few, comparatively speaking, were the guests, though some had ventured to travel twenty miles for the purpose; yet all was elegant. The day was lovely, and with the bright sunshine and cloudless sky, added new charms to this fairy land; for so, by the tasteful arrangement of gorgeous tents, sparkling fountains, exotic shrubs, and flowers of every form and shade, the *coup d'œil* might have been termed. Musicians were stationed in various parts of the grounds. The dance was enjoyed with spirit on the greensward, when the heat of the sun had subsided into the advancing twilight; and the picturesque groups, the chaste and elegant costumes scattered about, intermixed with the beauties of inanimate nature, added life and spirit to the picture.

It was an exciting and yet a soothing scene Some minds, untouched by care, would here have revelled in unchecked

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gladness. In others, it might have been productive of that soothing melancholy, which, from its very sweetness, we encourage till it becomes pain: such was the case with Caroline. Her spirits, buoyed up at first with the hope and expectation that here at least Lord Alphingham might resume his attentions unremarked, she had been excited to unwonted gaiety; but as the hours wore on, and he approached her not, that excitement faded into melancholy and doubt. Not even had the usual signals of intelligence passed between them, for he had been sedulously devoting himself to almost every beautiful girl in the gardens. Jealousy for a moment took possession of her mind, but that very quickly gave way to indignatior against her father.

"If he has been treated as Annie tells me, if his proposals for me have been rejected," she thought, "how can I expect or hope that he will continue his addresses? He knows not but that I have been consulted; and is my happiness to be overthrown, rudely cast aside, by the insinuations of a boy?" and covering her face with her hands, she burst into tears: the scene, the time, the faint sound of the distant music, encouraged these feelings, and heightened despondency. Day was darkening around her, aided by the sombre shade of the gigantic trees, which formed a grove where she sat; and the music borne along at intervals sounded unusually mournful. A heavy sigh near her aroused her from her painful trance, and starting, she beheld the object of her thoughts standing by her side. His speaking eyes were fixed on her with a glance not the most obtuse imagination could have misinterpreted, and the whole expression of his peculiarly handsome features betrayed the most eloquent and pleading sympathy.

"Oh, that it might be mine, the blessed privilege of endeavoring to soothe or to relieve this grief?" he passionately exclaimed, as with an air of the utmost respect he ventured to take her hand. "I had indulged in presumptuous hopes. I had ventured to read the flattering notice which I ever received from you as a confirmation of my wishes, and I indulged in fondly-cherished visions that ere this I should indeed have had a right, a holy right, to soothe your every grief and share in every joy. I thought wrong; your flattering notice must have been but the impulse of your kind heart, pitying what you could not fail to behold; and yet, oh, Miss Hamilton, that very demonstration of your gentle nature has increased my misery; it has bade me love, nay, adore you. I blame you not.

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I have been presumptuous—mad. I had no right to expect so much happiness. My proposals were refused. I was told your conduct must have made it evident that I was not pleasing to you. I fled from your presence, but I could not rest alone. Again, like a mad fool, I have plunged myself in the centre of fascination. I could not exist without the sound of your voice; though me it might never more address. I could not live without glancing on your expressive eyes, your eloquent smile, though on me neither more might beam. I am here, I feel my folly, but I cannot tear myself away Caroline, adorable Caroline!" he continued, with well-practiced passion, "only speak, command me; in what way can I relieve the grief in which I see you plunged? Give me at least the gratification of feeling I have been of service to you; that I have done somewhat for your happiness, though by you mine has fled for ever"

Rapidly yet eloquently had he spoken, and Caroline vainly struggled with herself to interrupt him. He believed she had rejected him, and in that moment she contrasted his present conduct with that of Lord St. Eval, under the same circumstances, and surely she could doubt no longer which loved her best. She had not seen the secret agony of the one—his proud and noble heart concealed it; but Alphingham—when such devoted love was offered her, would she condemn it to misery, and herself to everlasting reproach, if not to equal woe?

"You are mistaken, my Lord," she said, proudly, after a severe struggle with herself. "Lay not to my charge the loss of your happiness. I was not aware till this instant that it depended—" She stopped abruptly, for the natural modesty of her disposition prevented more, indignant as she was at the confirmation of Annie's suspicions.

Lord Alphingham saw his advantage, and pursued it.

"How!" he exclaimed in an accent of astonishment and ecstacy well combined. "Have you too been deceived, and my proposals rejected without having been laid before you? Can it be possible? Oh, speak again, my beloved Caroline! tell me I have not been too presuming—that I may hope that my long-cherished visions are not false You will not, oh, you will not condemn me to misery—you will not reject my heart, and send me despairing from your feet. Caroline, my beloved, my beautiful! say that you will be merciful—say that you love me—that I love not alone; oh, say, promise me you will be mine, and, come what will, we shall be happy."

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She heard, and her heart throbbed and her brain reeled, in the infatuation of that moment, all, all was forgotten save the persuasions of Annie, his pleading eloquence, the wild impulse of her own blinded fancy; the fatal promise passed her lips—she was pledged to be his own A few minutes she listened to his impassioned thanks, his words of devoted love, then suddenly starting back—

"My father!" she exclaimed, and burst into a passionate flood of tears.

"Nay, weep not, my beloved, my own! let not a mere shadow, for such in this instance is duty, alloy the felicity that will be ours. His consent will in time be given; fear not, when he sees you happy, when he sees my only care, my every thought is for your welfare, that his forgiveness for involuntary disobedience will be granted, and his unjust and cruel prejudices against me will pass away, for he will find they were indeed but fancy; and if he continues obdurate, oh, how rejoiced I shall be to have withdrawn my Caroline from his stern guardianship. Already has he deceived you; and can he then expect implicit obedience to unjust and unfounded commands on your part? Cheer up, my best love, fear not; trust to my affection, and all will be well."

But still she wept, even though Lord Alphingham continued this strain of consolation for some little time longer. Fearing at length to attract notice by her prolonged absence, she roused herself, and breaking from her triumphant lover, remained for a few minutes alone, endeavoring, but vainly, to recover that happiness which, when she had looked to an union with the Viscount, had promised to dawn around her. She saw it not; there was a dark, heavy, threatening cloud overhanging her mind, which no efforts could dispel. She felt, as she rejoined the glittering circle, the eye of the Duchess was fixed with startling earnestness upon her, and she shrunk from that severe look, as if indeed it could penetrate her soul and condemn the past. Why did not enjoyment return? Why was she not happy when in the centre of a scene like this? She knew not, and struggled to be gay and animated as usual; but she felt as if each effort failed, and drew upon her the attention of those near her, and rejoiced was she indeed when the festive hours had fled and she was alone. She strove to compose her troubled thoughts to prayer, but no words came to her aid, and throwing hersef on her bed, she wept for many weary hours. She could not have told why she thus wept;

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she only knew that she was wretched, that the light-heartedness once so peculiarly her own had fled, it seemed, for ever, and she shrunk almost in loathing from the hour when she should meet Lord Alphingham again; and when it came, even his presence cheered her not. He soothed, even gently reproached but as he did so there was somewhat in his eye she had never seen before, and which struck terror. Subdued as it was, it told of passions from which she had believed him exempt, and added additional pain to her distress. Noticing what she termed the indisposition of her young friend, the Duchess kindly advised her to remain quiet, nor join the gay party, till it had passed away; but as she spoke, Caroline observed the severe and scrutinizing glance of the Duchess again fixed upon her, and contrary to her advice, appeared as usual at dinner.

Days passed, and Lord Alphingham's plan was matured, and submitted to Caroline's sanction. A *fête*, similar to that given by the Duchess, only commencing at a later hour, to permit a superb display of fireworks on the grounds, was to be given by a neighboring nobleman, to which all the members of the Duchess's party were invited. The villa was some few miles off, and they were to leave Airslie at half-past eight. That day Caroline was to feign indisposition, and remain undisturbed at home; at ten Lord Alphingham would dispatch a trusty servant, well disguised, with a note, apparently from Mrs. Hamilton, requesting her daughter's immediate return, as she had been taken suddenly and dangerously ill. This note was, of course, designed to impose upon any member of the party who might, by some mischance, remain at home, and be circulated among the servants to account for her sudden departure. The carriage, said to be Mr. Hamilton's, waited for her; Lord Alphingham was to meet it at some five miles off; but once within it, once safe from Airslie, the rest was easy.

Caroline heard, and an inward shuddering crept chilly through her frame. Faintly and briefly she agreed to all he so eloquently and persuasively pleaded, and instantly left him.

"Will she be weak enough now to waver?" thought Alphingham. "Perhaps, after all, she is not worthy of all this trouble, there is no spirit in her; yet she is so beautiful, it will suit me well to introduce such a lovely creature as my bride next season, and gratify my vengeance on Mr. Hamilton for his unceremonious refusal, and if I get tired of her, if then

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tears and pale cheeks continue, why, thank heaven, no chains with me are binding. That early folly of mine was not so useless as it seemed; I may act as I please, and if your daughter sickens or offends me, Mr. Hamilton; as you have done, you may well dread my vengeance; it will fall upon you both, and I unscathed will seek other lands and fairer beauties, as I have already done." His countenance had darkened during this speech, but at its close it became clear again, and, with a careless whistle of unconcern, he sauntered away.

And was it to this man that the cherished child of so much anxiety was about to sacrifice herself. With him and for him, she, who had once been the soul of truth and honor, had consented to leave the guardianship of her father, and break the sacred links of nature. Alas! though her very spirit now revolted, she had gone too far. How could she, how dared she draw back? and yet one effort she would make. She would implore him to permit her to confess all to her parents; she was convinced, did they know how much her happiness depended on her union with him, they would consent, and with their blessing hallow their marriage. Happiness—Caroline shuddered; the wild excitement of secret love had departed. She knew she was beloved, she had given her promise, yet she was not happy; and could she then expect to be when irrevocably his own? Her brain reeled beneath the bewildering chaos of her thoughts; but she followed up her resolution, and implored him as she had intended. Lord Alphingham heard with a dark and frowning brow.

"And what becomes of your kind brother's just accusations?" demanded the Viscount, with a very evident and contemptuous sneer.

"Defend yourself, and papa will be convinced they are unfounded," was her reply. But she gazed on his countenance, and terrified at its expression; for the first time the thought flashed across her mind, could there indeed be any real cause for Percy's warning; and more and more earnestly did she beseech him to say she might implore her father's sanction. "Only let me confide in papa and mamma, let me try and convince them they are mistaken, and Percy too must be in error."

The Viscount for some little time endeavored mildly to confute her arguments, and convince her that in doing so, she was only forming her own misery; but still she pleaded, and ungoverned fury at length burst forth. He had been too long the victim of passions always to keep them in bounds, even when

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most required; and for a few minutes they spurned restraint and Caroline beheld him as he was, and saw in dim perspective the blackened future. She would have broken from him, but he detained her, and with a rapid transition of mood humbled himself before her, and with impassioned fervor and deep contrition besought her forgiveness, her pity. It was his fervid love, his fear of losing her, that bade him thus forget himself, and he conjured her not to condemn him to everlasting misery; that he was wretched enough already at having caused her one moment's pain. He spoke, and his softened voice, his imploring eyes, his protestations of unalterable love and gratitude, if she would but trust to his affections, and be his own as he proposed, had in a degree their effect. She was convinced it would only bring forth misery now to implore the sanction and blessing of her parents, and promised to resign all idea of so doing. But vainly she strove to forget that burst of ungoverned passion she had witnessed; it haunted her sleeping and waking thoughts, and his protestations of devoted love were dimmed beside it, they shared its blackened hue.

The appointed day came, and the Duchess, without question or remark, accepted Caroline's excuse for not accompanying her and her friends to the expected *fete*. The heavy eyes and pale cheeks of the misguided girl were more than sufficient excuse; she even seconded Caroline in refusing the kind offer of Lady Annie and Lady Lucy Melville to remain with her. She said she preferred being quite alone, as she was no companion for any one, and it appeared as if not even that obstacle would arise to prevent her flight.

The hours wore on; the noble guests could speak of nothing but the anticipated *fete* and its attendant pleasures, while they wiled away the intervening hours in the library, the music-room, the garden, wherever their taste dictated, for freedom was ever the password of Airslie; but Caroline joined them not. It was the second day that she had not seen the Viscount; for, fearing to attract notice, he had never made his visits unusually frequent, and well versed in intrigue, he had carried on his intercourse with Caroline in impenetrable secrecy. More than once in those lonely hours did she feel as if her brain reeled, and become confused, for she could not banish thought. She had that morning received letters from home, and in her present mood each line breathed affection, which her now awakened conscience told her was undeserved. Nature and reason had resumed their sway, as if to add their

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tortures to the anguish of those hours. The misery which had been her portion, since her acceptance of Lord Alphingham, had slowly but surely drawn the blinding film from her eyes. The light of reason had broke upon them with a lustre that would no more be darkened. At the same moment that she knew she did not love Lord Alphingham, her conduct to her parents, to St. Eval, appeared in their true colors. Yes! this was no fancy, she had been the victim of infatuation, of excitement; but clearer and clearer dawned the truth. She was sacrificing herself to one whom she did not love, whom she had never loved, with whom her life would be a dreary waste; and for this was she about to break the ties of nature, fly from her parents, perhaps draw down upon her head their curse, or what she now felt would be worse, much worse, wring that mother's heart with anguish, whose conduct, now that reason had resumed her throne, she was convinced had been ever guided by the dictates of affection. She recalled with vivid clearness her every interview with Annie, and she saw with bitter self-reproach her own blindness and folly, in thus sacrificing her own judgment to false reasoning, in withdrawing her confidence and affection from the mother who had never once deceived her, to bestow them on one who had played upon her foolish weakness, heightened her scarcely-dawning fancy till it became infatuation, and finally recommended that plan of conduct from which Caroline's whole soul revolted. Why had she done this? Caroline felt, to bring down shame upon her head and suffering on her mother. Her parents' conduct changed towards her—oh! had not hers changed to them? had she not acted from the first of Annie's arrival in London as if under the influence of some spell? and now that it was rudely broken, recollections of the past mingled with and heightened her present sufferings. Her childhood, her early youth rushed like a torrent on her mind; faulty as they had been, they were innocent and pure compared with her present self. Then she had ever been actuated by truth, candor, respectful love, affectionate confidence towards her parents; now all had been cast aside. If her mother's words were true, and bitterly she felt they were, that her conduct to St. Eval had been one continued falsehood, what would her parents feel when her intercourse with Lord Alphingham was discovered. Lord Alphingham—she shuddered as his name rose to her lips. Her heart yearned with passionate intensity towards her mother, to hear her voice in blessing, to see her beaming smile, and feel her kiss

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of approbation, such as at Oakwood she had so often received she longed in utter wretchedness for them. That night she was wilfully to cast them off for ever, flee as a criminal from all she loved; and if she could return home, confess all, would that confiding love ever be hers again? She shrunk in trembling terror from her father's sternness, her mother's look of woe, struggling with severity, the coldness, the displeasure she would excite—on all sides she beheld but misery; but to fly with Lord Alphingham, to bind herself for ever with one, whom every passing hour told her she did not, could not love—oh, all, all, even death itself, were preferable to that! The words of her brother sounded incessantly in her ears: "If you value my sister's future peace, let her be withdrawn from his society." How did she know that those words were wholly without foundation? the countenance of the Viscount as he had alluded to them confirmed them to her now awakened eye. Was she about to wed herself to crime? She remembered the perfect justness, the unwavering charity of her father, and in those softened moments she felt assured he would not have condemned him without good cause. Why, oh, why had she thus committed herself? where was she to turn for succor? where look for aid to guard from her the fate she had woven for herself? Where, in her childish faults, had her mother taught her to seek for assistance and forgiveness? Dare she address her Maker, the God whom, in those months of infatuated blindness, she had deserted; Him, whom her deception towards her parents, had offended, for she had trampled on His holy laws, she had honored them not.

The hour of seven chimed; three hours more, and her fate was irrevocably sealed—the God of her youth profaned; for could she ever address Him again when the wife of Alphingham? from whose lips no word of religion ever came, whose most simple action had lately evinced contempt for its forms and restrictions. The beloved guardians of her infant years, the tender friends of her youth insulted, lowered by her conduct in the estimation of the world, liable to reproach; their very devotion for so many years to their children condemned, ridiculed. An inseparable bar placed between her and the hand-in-hand companions of her youth; never again should she kneel with them around their parents, and with them share the fond impressive blessing. Oakwood and its attendant innocence and joys, had they passed away forever? She thought on the anguish that had been her mother's, when in her child-

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hood she had sinned, and what was she now about to inflict? She saw her bowed down in the depth of misery; she heard her agonized prayer for mercy on her child.

"Saviour of my mother, for her sake, have mercy on her unworthy child! oh, save me from myself, restore me to my mother!" and sinking on her knees, the wretched girl buried her face in her hands, and minutes, which to her appeared like hours, rolled on in that wild burst of repentant and remorseful agony.

CHAPTER VII.

"DEAREST mother, this is indeed like some of Oakwood's happy hours," exclaimed Emmeline, that same evening, as with childish glee she had placed herself at her mother's feet, and raised her laughing eyes to her face, with an expression of fond, confiding love.

She and Ellen were sitting alone with Mrs. Hamilton, Miss Harcourt being engaged at a friend's, and Mr. Hamilton having been summoned after dinner to a private interview with his solicitor on the Myrvin affairs.

The lovely evening was slowly wearing on to twilight, and the sky, shadowed as it was by the towering mansions of Berkeley Square, yet bore all the rich hues which had attended the repose of a brilliant, setting sun. The balcony of the drawing-room where they were sitting was filled with flowers, and the window being thrown widely open, the gentle breeze of summer filled the room with their sweet fragrance. It was that hour of evening when even London is somewhat hushed. Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton had been more at home since Caroline's visit to Airslie, but yet not one evening had so vividly reminded Emmeline of her dear Oakwood as the present; it was thus in twilight she had often sought her mother, and given vent, by a thousand little innocent devices to the warm emotions that filled her heart.

Ellen had been standing by the flowers, but on hearing her cousin's exclamation, she too had established herself on the couch by her aunt, and added—

"You are right, dear Emmeline; it is indeed."

There was an anxiety on Mrs. Hamilton's heart, which she could not define; but was yet unable to resist the innocent happiness of her young companions, and twining her arm playfully round Ellen, she abandoned her other hand to Emmeline and answered—

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"I am very glad, my dear children, that such a simple thing as my company can afford you so much pleasure."

"It is so very rare now to have you thus all alone, mamma, can it be otherwise than delight? I do not even want papa yet, we three make such a comfortable party."

"You are exceedingly polite to my uncle, Emmeline. I have a good mind to tell him when he rejoins us," said Ellen, laughing.

"Do so, my mischievous cousin, and I shall get a kiss for your pains. I know where mamma's thoughts are, though she is trying to be as merry as we are; she wants another to make this Oakwood hour complete."

"I ought not to wish for your sister, my love, she is happier where she is than she would be here, particularly to-night, for Lord D— gives a splendid *fête* at his beautiful villa, similar to that given by the Duchess ten days ago, at which I should think Caroline must have been delighted, though she wrote but little of it."

"There is a tone in her letters, mamma, that tells me she will be as pleased as ourselves to be at Oakwood again, though she may fancy *fêtes*, assemblies, and a long list of et ceteras, are the most delightful things in existence; and do you know, mamma, I will not permit you to say you ought not to wish for her, because she is happier where she is than she would be here; it is high treason in my presence to say or even think so."

"I must plead guilty, then, my Emmeline, and place my case in Ellen's hands as counsel for the defendant, or throw myself on your mercy."

"In consideration of the peculiar happiness of this evening, I pronounce pardon," answered Emmeline, laughing, as she kissed her mother's hand.

"A letter we received this morning tells us of one who longs to behold us all again, spite of the many and varied pleasures of his exciting life, does it not, my dear aunt?"

"It does indeed, my love. Our Edward's letters have been, ever since he left us, sources of consolation and delight to me, though I do excite my Ellen's jealousy at the greater length of his letters to me than of those to her," she added, smiling.

"My brother knows that his letters to you impart pleasure and satisfaction, he cannot bestow greater happiness on me, however short mine may be," answered Ellen, earnestly; "and when he writes so fully to you and so fondly to me, I have

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every reason to be quite contented; his time is not so much at his own disposal as mine is."

"I wonder where he can find time to write such lengthy epistles to mamma," observed the smiling Emmeline. "I peeped over her shoulder this morning as she was reading, and was astounded to perceive it was written nearly as closely as mine would be. I wonder how he manages, sailors are said to be such bad correspondents."

"Have you forgotten what I used so repeatedly to say to you, when you were a lazy little girl, Emmeline, and were ever ready to escape disagreeable tasks, by saying you were quite sure you never could succeed—'Where there's a will there's a way.'"

"Indeed, I have not forgotten it, dear mamma; it often comes across me now, when I am ready to despair; and so I shall just read it to Master Ned when he returns, as a lecture for not writing to me."

"Nay, Emmeline, that would be demanding too much from our young sailor; there is moderation in every thing, you know."

"Not in me, mamma," answered Emmeline, laughing. "You know I am always in extremes, up in the skies one minute, and down, down on the lowest earth the next. I sometimes wish I was like Ellen, always unruffled, always calm and collected. You will go through the world better than I shall, my quiet cousin."

"Shall I?" replied Ellen, faintly smiling. But Mrs. Hamilton could perceive that which the thoughtless Emmeline regarded not, a deep crimson staining apparently with pain the pale fair face of her niece, and she thought not with her daughter.

"And how much longer does Ned intend being away from us?" demanded Emmeline, after a long pause.

"He cannot give us any idea yet," answered her mother; "perhaps some time next year. They were to cruise off the shores of South America these autumnal months, and winter, Edward thinks, at Buenos Ayres. He is pleased at this, as he will see so very much more of the New World than he expected, when he left us."

"What an entertaining companion he will be when he returns," exclaimed Emmeline.

"Or rather ought to be, Emmeline," remarked Ellen, quietly.

"Now, what an insinuation! Ellen, you are too bad to-

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night, and against your brother, of all persons in the world. It is just like the ill compliment you paid him on his gallantry in saving the Syren and all her crew—absolutely would not believe that your brother Edward and the young hero of my tale were one and the same person."

"I can forgive her skepticism then," said Mrs. Hamilton, affectionately. "The extraordinary efforts you described were indeed almost beyond credence, when known to have been those of a lad but just seventeen; but I hope my Ellen is no longer a skeptic as to the future fame and honor of her brother," she added, kindly addressing her niece.

"Oh, I dare not indulge in one-half the bright visions, the fond hopes that will intrude themselves upon my mind for him," exclaimed Ellen, with involuntary energy.

"Why, Ellen, are you sometimes a victim to the freaks of imagination as well as myself?" asked her cousin laughing.

"I have frequently compelled myself to seek active employment," answered Ellen, "lest those hopes should be indeed but fading visions, and my disappointment more painfully bitter."

"You do your brother injustice in even fancying disappointment," said her aunt, playfully, "and I must act as defendant for the absent. I believe, say, and protest my firm belief, that the name of Edward Fortescue will stand one of the highest in naval fame, both as a commander and a man. The naval honor of my family will, I feel assured, have a worthy representative in my noble nephew, and I will not have one word breathed in doubt or mistrust on the subject."

"If you think so, then I may hope indeed," Ellen said with earnestness. "And the recollection of the past"—

"Must heighten anticipations for the future, my dear girl, or I must sentence them to perpetual banishment. Condemn them never to be recalled," interrupted Mrs. Hamilton, still more playfully, and then added—

"Emmeline, have you no wish to know how the object of your kind sympathy, poor Lilla, parted from her father and me to-day?"

"I quite forgot all about it, mamma; this Oakwood hour has made me so selfish. I thought of no one but ourselves," replied Emmeline. "Gratify my curiosity now. Did Lady Helen evince any sorrow at the separation?"

"Not so much, as, for Lilla's sake, I could have wished. She has been so unfortunately prejudiced against her, both by

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Annie and Miss Malison, that although I am convinced she loves her child, she never will evince any proof of it; and Lilla's unhappy temperament has, of course, increased this prejudice, which I fear will require years to remove, unless Annie be soon married, and Miss Malison removed from Lady Helen's establishment. Then Lilla's really excellent qualities will quickly be made evident."

"Mr. Grahame is already convinced she is a very different girl to that she has been represented, is he not?" asked Ellen.

"He is; and I trust, from the awakened knowledge, happiness is dawning upon them both. I could not see unmoved his struggle to part with her to-day, brief as the separation will be--scarcely six short months."

"I was quite sure Mr. Grahame loved his children, though Annie and Cecil did say so much about his sternness," said Emmeline, somewhat triumphantly.

"Mr. Grahame's feelings are naturally the very warmest, but disappointment in some of his dearest hopes has, in some cases, unfortunately caused him to veil them; I regret this, both for Cecil and Lilla's sake, as I think, had he evinced greater interest and affection for them in their childish years, they might both have been different in character."

"But it is not too late now?"

"I trust not for Lilla; but I greatly fear, from all I have heard, that Cecil's character is already formed. Terrified at his father's harshness, he has always shrunk from the idea of making him his friend, and has associated only with the young men of his mother's family, who, some few years older than himself, and devoted to fashion and gay amusements, are not the very best companions he could have selected, but whose near relationship seems to have prevented all interference on the part of Mr. Grahame. Cecil must now be sixteen, and I fear no alteration in his father's conduct will efface the impressions already received."

"But, changed as Mr. Grahame is towards Lilla, was it still necessary for her to go to Mrs. Douglas? Could not her reformation have been effected equally well at home?"

"No, my love; her father, delighted at finding he had engaged her affections, and that some of the representations he had heard were false, would in all probability, have gone to the contrary extreme, and indulged her as much, if not more than he had previously neglected her. Lilla has very many faults, which require steady yet not harsh correction, and

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which from her earliest age demanded the greatest care, being neglected, they have strengthened with her years. The discipline she will now be under will at first be irksome, and perhaps Lilla may find all I have said in Mrs. Douglas's favor very contrary to reality; but I have such a good opinion of her docility, when reasoned with kindly, that I do not doubt all such impressions will be effaced when she visits us at Christmas."

"Well, however kind Mrs. Douglas may be, I should not like to be in Lilla's place," observed Emmeline, and then added, with her usual animation, "Ah, mamma, how can we ever be sufficiently grateful to you for never sending us from you? I might have loved you very dearly, but I could not have looked upon you as my best and dearest friend, as I do now."

"It is sufficient recompense for all my care that you do look on me thus, my sweet child," exclaimed Mrs. Hamilton, with involuntary emotion, and she bent down to impress a kiss on Emmeline's forehead as she spoke, that she might conceal an unusual tear which had started to her eye, for the unrestrained confidence and unabated affection of her younger daughter, while it soothed, yet rendered the conduct of Caroline by its contrast more painful; and, almost unconsciously, she added—

"Oh, that this confidence and affection may never change, never be withdrawn."

"Change!" repeated Emmeline and Ellen at the same moment; but they checked themselves, for they knew where the thoughts of their much-loved relative had wandered, and they felt she had indeed sufficient cause for all her solicitude. Recovering herself almost instantly, Mrs. Hamilton resumed the conversation in a more cheerful tone, by demanding of Emmeline if her busy fancy had pictured how Oakwood was to look, on their return to it in a fortnight's time.

"She certainly must have done so," answered Ellen, laughing; "for she has had so many reveries over her drawing and work this week, that nothing less important could have occasioned them."

Emmeline shook her head archly, and answered gayly; and her dear old venerable home was the engrossing theme of conversation till the return of Mr. Hamilton, a short time afterwards.

"Congratulate me, all of you," he said, in a joyous tone;

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"my business is proceeding most favorably. Mr. Myrvin need know nothing about it till all is settled; the dishonorable conduct of his enemies brought to light, and himself reinstated in his little domain, once more the minister of Llangwillan. Thanks to the able conduct of Mr. Allan, all will soon be made clear. As soon as we are at Oakwood, Ellen, you shall write to Mr. Myrvin, and invite him to spend some little time with us; and when he leaves us, I trust it will be once more for Llangwillan and its own pretty vicarage."

"Dear, dear uncle!" exclaimed Ellen, starting up and clinging to his arm, "oh, how can I thank you for your interference in behalf of him who was the first friend I knew in England? the consoler of my mother—the"—

"The good man who first told us what a troublesome charge I should find in my niece," interrupted Mrs. Hamilton, playfully.

"I have indeed been a trouble to you," replied Ellen, with a suppressed yet heavy sigh, and her uncle's hand dropped from her grasp.

"Ellen!" said Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton at the same instant, in an accent of reproach.

"Have I not?" she continued with unusual impetuosity. "Did I not cause you misery, you, who from the first moment you knew me, loved me more than I deserved? Did I not make both of you ill in health and wretched in mind, and yet your kindness now is greater than before? There is not a wish—not a desire I express, but is granted on the instant; and I—oh, I have no power to—to—"

"You will, at least, have the power of making me seriously displeased if you speak in this way again, and thus turn my sportive words to gloom," said Mrs. Hamilton, gravely, but gently drawing the agitated girl with tenderness to her. "Come, come, Ellen, I will not have Emmeline's happy Oakwood hour thus alloyed. You may reward me yet for all, and one day, perhaps, make me your debtor. That may appear very impossible now," she added, smiling, as Ellen raised her large eyes incredulously to her face; "but more improbable things have come to pass."

"And where is Arthur to be while his father is with us?" demanded Emmeline, joyously, of her father. "Not as a servitor at college, I hope."

"No; I anticipate the pleasure of welcoming the friend of Herbert as my guest as well as his father, and then we shall

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deliberate on Arthur's future life. I should like much to place him under Mr. Howard for a year, and then establish him in a living of Lord Malvern's, in which I have little doubt I could succeed."

"Well, my fancy then will indeed be gratified. I shall see this proud persecuted youth, and judge for myself if he be deserving or not of my brother's friendship. Do you remember him, Ellen?"

"Perfectly well; he was so very kind to me. I will recollect his grief when I left the village, to live, he said, in such a very different style, that it was not likely we should ever meet again."

"But yet, you see, improbable as it appeared, you will meet again," said Mrs. Hamilton in a marked tone, as she smiled.

"So you call this an Oakwood hour, Emmy, do you?" demanded Mr. Hamilton, after Arthur and his father had been duly discussed. "Suppose we make the resemblance even more complete by ringing for lights, and you and Ellen giving me some music. I have had no opportunities of hearing your improvement, which I suppose, under such able professors, has been something extraordinary."

"Marvellous, most marvellous!" exclaimed Emmeline, laughing, as she flew to obey him by ringing the bell. "I had begun to fancy I was practising for nothing, and that my father would never do his child the honor of listening to her again, but I remembered the enchanted halls of Oakwood, and I thought there at least I might chain him to my side, and so I continued my labors."

"Let us fancy ourselves there," replied her father, smiling; and lights appearing, Emmeline and Ellen were speedily at the instruments, bestowing pleasure unalloyed by this domestic use of their talents to those dear ones who had so assiduously cultivated them. Their improvements, under the best professors in London, had been rapid; for, carefully prepared, no difficulties had to be overcome ere improvement commenced and the approbation and evident pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton amply repaid those young and innocent beings for all the exertions they had made, particularly Emmeline, who, as we know, had determined, on her first arrival in London, to prove she would not learn, when all around her was so changed.

"Surely, surely, Caroline, surrounded by gayety as she is, cannot be as happy as I am to-night," burst with wild glee

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from the lips of Emmeline, as at about half-past ten o'clock her father kissed her glowing cheek, and thanked her for the pleasing recreation she had given him. She had scarcely spoken, when a carriage was heard driving somewhat rapidly through the Square, then stopped, it appeared at their door, and a thundering and truly aristocratic rap resounded, startling not a little the inmates of that peaceful drawing-room.

"Who can it be at this hour?" demanded Emmeline, in an accent of bewilderment. "How very disagreeable. I did not wish any intrusion to-night. Mamma, dear mamma, you look terrified."

Mr. Hamilton had opened the drawing-room door, and was about to descend the stairs, for he too was startled at this unusual visit; but he turned at Emmeline's words, for his wife did not usually indulge in unfounded alarm or anticipated fears, but at that instant her wonted presence of mind appeared about to desert her; she was pale as marble, and had started up in an attitude of terror.

Voices were heard, and steps, well-known steps, ascending the stairs.

"It is the Duchess of Rothbury's voice and step—my child!" burst from her lips, in an accent that neither Emmeline nor Ellen ever could forget, and she sunk back almost fainting on her seat. Her children flew to her side in alarm, but ere a minute had passed away that wild anxiety was calmed, for Caroline herself entered with the Duchess, but her deathlike cheek, blanched lip, and haggard eye told a tale of suffering which that mother could not mark unmoved. Vainly Mrs. Hamilton strove to rise and welcome the Duchess: she had no power to move from her chair.

"Caroline, my child!" were the only words her faltering tongue could utter; and that agonized voice thrilled through the heart of the now truly unhappy girl, and roused her from that trance of overwhelming emotion which bade her stand spellbound at the threshold. She sprung forward, and sinking at her mother's feet, buried her face in her robe.

"Mother, my injured mother, oh, do not, do not hate me!" she murmured, in a voice almost inarticulate. "I deserve to be cast from your love, to lose your confidence for ever. I have deceived you—I—" Sobs choked her utterance, and the grieving mother could only throw her arms around her child, and press her convulsively to her heart. Anxiety, nearly equal to that of his wife, had been an inmate of Mr. Hamilton's

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bosom as the Duchess's voice reached his ear; but as he glanced on Caroline, a frown gathered on his brow. He trembled involuntarily, for he felt assured it was imprudence, to give it the mildest term, in her conduct that called for this untimely visit, this strange return to her home. Already he had been deceived; and while every softened feeling struggled for mastery in the mother's bosom, the father stood ready to judge and to condemn, fiercely conquering every rising emotion that swelled within. There was even more lofty majesty in the carriage of her Grace, as she carefully closed the drawing-room door behind her, and slowly advanced towards Mrs. Hamilton; a cold, severe, unbending expression in every feature, that struck terror to the hearts of both Emmeline and Ellen, whose innocent festivity was indeed now rudely checked.

"Mrs. Hamilton," the Duchess said, and the grave and sad accents of her voice caused the anxious mother hastily to raise her head, and gaze inquiringly in her face, "to my especial care you committed your child. I promised to guard her as my own, and on that condition alone you intrusted her to me; I alone, therefore, restore her to you, thank God, unscathed. I make no apology for this strange and apparently needless intrusion at this late hour; deceived as I have been, my house was no longer a fitting home for your daughter, and not another night could I retain her, when my judgment told me her father's watchful guardianship alone could protect her from the designing arts of one, of whom but very little is known, and that little not such as would recommend him to my favor. You, too, have been deceived, cruelly deceived, by that weak, infatuated girl. Had you been aware that Lord Alphingham was her secretly favored lover, that the coldness with which she ever treated him in public, the encouragement of another, were but to conceal from you and her father her attachment to him, you would not have consented to her joining a party of which he was a member. At my house he has received increased encouragement. I marked them with a jealous eye, for I could not believe his attentions sanctioned either by you or Mr. Hamilton; but even my vigilance was at fault, for she had consented to sever every tie which bound her to her too indulgent parents, and fly with him to Scotland. This night would have seen the accomplishment of their design. Had one of my children behaved thus, it would have been less a matter of bewilderment to me than such conduct in a daughter of yours. I have neglected to seek their confidence, their

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affection. You have never rested in your endeavors to obtain both, and, therefore, that such should be your recompense is sad indeed. I sympathisze with you, my dearest friend," she continued, in a tone of much more feeling than she ever allowed to be visible. "In the tale of shame I am repeating, I am inflicting misery upon you, I feel I am; and yet, in resigning my charge, I must do my duty, and set you on your guard, and let this one reflection be your comfort, that it was the recollection of your untiring care, your constant affection which checked this infatuated girl in her career of error, and bade her pause ere it was too late. For her sufferings I have little pity; she is no longer the character I believed her. Neither integrity, honor, nor candor can be any longer inmates of her heart; the confession I have heard this night has betrayed a lengthened scheme of deception, to which, had I heard it of her, I should have given no credence. Forgive me, my dear Emmeline, and look not on me so beseechingly; painful as it is, in the sincerest friendship alone I place before your too partial eyes the real character of your child. I have now done my duty, and will therefore leave you. God bless you, and grant you strength to bear this bitter trial." She turned to the unhappy father, who, as she spoke, had, overcome with uncontrollable agitation, sunk on a chair and covered his face with his hands, but with a strong effort he roused himself as she pronounced his name, and rose.

"Mr. Hamilton, to your wife, your inestimable wife, you owe the preservation of your child this night from sin. Let her not, I beseech you, afflict herself too deeply for those sufferings under which she may behold Caroline for a time the victim. She deserves them all—all; but she merits not one-half that affection which her fond and loving mother would lavish on her. I leave you now, but, trust me, feeling deeply for you both."'

"Nay, rest with us to-night, at least," exclaimed Mr. Hamilton, conquering himself sufficiently to think of his friend's situation, alone, in London, at such a late hour, and endeavoring to persuade her to remain with them; but decidedly, yet kindly, she refused.

"I sleep at St. James's, and shall be back at Airslie to morrow morning before my guests are recovered from the effects of to-night," she urged. "Your hospitality is kindly meant, Hamilton, but I cannot accept it; both Caroline and her mother can dispense with my company now."

"Then let me accompany you home?"

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"I will not hear of it, my good friend. Good night, once more; God bless you!"

Mr. Hamilton knew the character of his noble friend too well to urge more, and therefore contented himself by accompanying her down stairs.

To describe Mrs. Hamilton's feelings, as she listened to the words of the Duchess, would be indeed a vain attempt. We know all the anguish she had suffered when Caroline's conduct had first caused her uneasiness, and now the heightened agony of her fond heart may be easily imagined. Almost unconsciously she had withdrawn her arm; but Caroline clung more convulsively to her robe, and her first wild words sounded again and again in her mother's ears, soothing while they inflicted pain.

"Can it be possible I have heard aright? Have I indeed been thus deceived?" she asked, struggling to speak calmly, when the Duchess and her husband had left the room; and she fixed her sad, searching glance upon Caroline, who for a moment raised her head.

"Mother, dearest mother, condemn me, despise me as you please; I deserve it all," she replied, in an accent of most piercing wretchedness. "Only say that I may in time regain your love, your confidence; that you will take me to your heart again. I have disregarded your affection; I have wilfully cast it from me. Yet—oh, if you knew all I have suffered. Mamma, mamma, oh, speak but one word more of kindness! I know I deserve it not, but my heart feels breaking. I have no other friend on earth but you; oh, call me but your child again, mother!"

Her voice utterly failed, a film suddenly obscured her sight, and a sense of suffocation rose in her throat; the misery of the last ten days, the wretchedness and excitement of that day had deprived her of more strength than she was at all aware of, and with one convulsive effort to clasp her mother's hand to her throbbing heart, she sunk exhausted at her feet. Emmeline would have flown for assistance, but a look from her mother bade her pause, and she remained with Ellen to seek those restoratives that were at hand. With a throbbing heart and trembling hand, Mrs. Hamilton raised her repentant child, and with the assistance of Emmeline placed her tenderly on the nearest couch, endeavoring, though for some few minutes in vain, to recall her scattered senses. Tears fell from that fond mother's eyes upon Caroline's deathlike features, and ere

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life returned she had been pressed again and again to her heart, and repeated kisses imprinted on her marble brow. It mattered not at that moment that she had been deceived, that Caroline had withdrawn alike her confidence and affection, that her conduct the last few months had been productive of bitter disappointment and extreme anguish, all, all, was forgotten; the mother only knew her child was suffering—only felt she was restored to her arms; again and again she kissed her erring child, beseeching her with fond and gentle words to wake and know she was forgiven.

Slowly Caroline recovered consciousness, and unclosing her eyes, gazed wildly yet sadly on all by whom she was surrounded. All the father had struggled with Mr. Hamilton, as he stood by her side during the continuance of her swoon; but now sternness again darkened his brow, and he would have given vent to his wounded feelings in severe though just reproaches, but the beseeching glance, the agonized voice of his wife arrested him.

"Arthur, my husband, oh, for my sake, spare her now!" she passionately exclaimed, clasping his hand in hers, and looking up in his face with imploring earnestness. "Spare her, at least, till from her own lips we have heard all; she is in no state to bear anger now, however deserved. Arthur, dearest Arthur, oh, do not reproach her till we know what it is that has caused the wretchedness, the suffering we behold! For my sake, spare her now."

"Mother," murmured the unhappy girl, with a powerful effort rising from the couch, and flinging herself on Mrs. Hamilton's neck, "do not plead for me; I do not deserve it. My conduct to you the last few months would alone demand the severest reproaches papa could inflict; and that, oh, that is but little to the crime I should have committed, had not the remembrance of all your devotion rushed to my mind, and arrested me, but a few brief hours ere it would have been too late, and I should have sacrificed myself to a man I discovered I did not love, merely to prove I was not a slave to your dictates, that I had a will of my own, and with or without your consent would abide by it. I have been infatuated, blinded on by artful persuasion, false representations, and weakly I have yielded. Do not weep for me, Emmeline, I am not worthy of your tears. You would have guided me aright; you would have warned me, advised me, but I rejected your counsel, spurned your affection; with contempt, aversion from

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all, from each, do I deserve to be regarded. Ellen, you may triumph now; I did all I could to prove how I hated and despised you some months ago, and now, oh, how much more have I fallen. Oh, why, why did I ever leave Oakwood?—why was I so eager to visit London?" Exhaustion choked her voice, the vehemence with which she had spoken overpowered her, and her mother was compelled to lead her to a couch, and force her to sit down beside her. Mr. Hamilton spoke not; for a few minutes he paced the room with agitated steps, and then hastily quitted it.

"It is so very late, you had better retire, my dear girls." Mrs. Hamilton said, after a brief pause, addressing Emmeline and Ellen, who yet lingered sorrowfully near her. They understood her hint, and instantly obeyed, both affectionately but silently embracing Caroline ere they departed; and it was a relief to Mrs. Hamilton's anxious bosom to find herself alone with her painfully repentant child. For some time did that interview continue; and when Caroline retired to rest, it was with a spirit lighter than it had been for many weeks, spite of the dark clouds she still felt were aroud her. All her strange wayward feelings had been confessed. She laid no stress on those continued letters she had received from Annie, which had from the first alienated her from her mother. Remorse was too busy within to bid her attempt to defend herself by inculpating others; but though she carefully avoided reference to her misleading friend, Mrs. Hamilton could easily, very easily, perceive from whose arts all her own misery and Caroline's present suffering originated; and bitterly in secret she reproached herself for ever permitting that intimacy to continue, and obtain the influence it had. To Lord St. Eval and her conduct to him the unhappy girl also referred. Pride was completely at an end; every question Mrs. Hamilton asked was answered with all that candor and integrity which had once characterized her most trifling words; and while her undisguised confession on many points occasioned the most poignant sorrow, yet still, as the mother listened, and gazed on those expressive features, something whispered within her that her child would be a blessing still. She owned that from the moment she had rejected Lord St. Eval, regret had become so unceasing, that to escape it she had listened and encouraged Lord Alphingham more than she had done before; his professions of devoted love had appeared as balm, and deadened the reproaches of conscience. Why she had so carefully concealed

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from her parents that which she imagined was love for the Viscount she could not explain, unless it was her weakness in following the example of others, who, she had been told, shrunk from confessing love-stories to their mothers; or, and that Mrs. Hamilton believed much nearer the real reason, she did not love him sufficiently to implore their consent to his addresses. She acknowledged, when their prohibition to her acquaintance with him was given, she had longed to confess the truth, and implore them at least to say why she might no longer enjoy his society; but that she had felt too indignant at what she deemed the slavery in which she was held, and discontent and irritation then took possession of her, instead of willing obedience. She described her feelings when he appeared at Airslie, the many struggles she then had with herself; and, finally, her wretchedness from the moment she had consented to be his wife; her entreaties that he would permit her to implore her father's consent; her agony the same evening; her fervent prayer for forgiveness and guidance; and, at length, her determination to elude him by setting off for home the instant the Duchess and her party had left the villa, which intention she had endeavored to put in force by imploring the assistance and secrecy of her Grace's own maid, to procure her a safe carriage and fleet horses, as she was compelled to return home that same night; she would leave a note, she said, explaining her reason for her departure to her Grace. She fancied Allison must have betrayed her, as, when she was every minute expecting to hear the carriage was ready, the Duchess entered her room, and, after a brief but stern interview, ordered her own carriage, and had herself accompanied her to town

Mrs. Hamilton listened to this long sad tale without interrupting it by a word of reproach. Not once did she speak aught that might tend to increase the anguish under which it was so evident Caroline was suffering. Soothingly she spoke, and that fond yet saddened tone caused the poor girl's bursting heart to find relief in a violent flood of tears. She clung, even as in childhood, to her mother's neck, and as she wept, felt yet more bitterly the infatuated folly of her conduct in having for a moment forsaken the guidance of her true and kindest friend, for the apparently more pleasing, because flattering, confidence of one whom she now knew to be false and utterly deceiving.

"But may he not still claim me!" she wildly exclaimed. "Will he not hold me up to the world as a faithless, capricious

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girl? I shall be the laughing-stock of all with whom we associate. Annie is not likely to keep my secret. Oh, why did I ever confide in her? Mother, I shall be despised, derided. I know I have brought it on myself, but oh, how can I bear it?"

"We leave London so very shortly, that I trust you will not be exposed to the derision you so much dread," replied Mrs. Hamilton, soothingly, "and by next season I hope all floating rumors that your conduct must occasion may have entirely passed away. You need not fear the scorn of the circle in which we principally mingle; and that of Annie's companions, if the dread of their laughter keep you from seeking, as you have done, their society, forgive me, my love, if I say I shall rejoice; for you will then no longer be exposed to example and precept contrary to those I have endeavored to instil."

"But, Lord Alphingham, what will he say or do?" murmured Caroline, almost inaudible.

"You must write to him, Caroline, dissolving your engagement; there is no other way."

"Write to him, mother, I—oh, no, no, I cannot."

"If you do not, you will still be exposed to constant annoyance; he may choose to believe that you were forced by compulsion to return to us. The circumstance of the Duchess herself accompanying you to town, he will consider as sufficient evidence. Acting on your promise, on your avowed preference, unless you write yourself, he will leave no means untried to succeed in his sinful schemes. Painful as is the task, or rather more disagreeable than painful if you do not love him, no one but yourself must write, and the sooner you do so the better."

"But if he really loves me? How can I—how dare I inflict more pain, more disappointment, than I have done already?"

"Loves you!" repeated Mrs. Hamilton, and displeasure mingled in her saddened tone; "Caroline, do not permit yourself to be thus egregiously deceived. He may fancy that he does, but it is no true honorable love; if it were, would he thus bear you by stealth from the friend to whom you were intrusted? If his conscience were indeed free from all stain, would he have refused your entreaties that you might confess your love to us, and beseech our blessing on your union? Would he have shrunk from defending his conduct according to your advice? Nay, more; if this accusation, which he has traced by some means to Percy, were indeed unfounded and unjust, do you think he would have refrained one moment

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from coming forward and asserting, not only by word but by proof, his unblemished innocence? His silence is to me the clearest proof of conduct that will not bear investigation; and I tremble to think what miseries, what wretchedness might have been your portion, had you indeed consented to his unworthy proposal." Her voice faltered, and she drew the still weeping girl closer to her, as if her maternal love should protect her from every evil. Caroline answered not, and after a few minutes Mrs. Hamilton said, with tenderness—

"You do not repent your decision, my own child? You do not regret that you have returned to those who love and cherish you so fondly? Speak to me, love."

Convulsively Caroline's hand pressed her mother's, as if that pressure should say nothing more should part them; then suddenly sinking on her knees before her, she forced back the choking sobs, and said, clearly and distinctly—

"Mother, I dare no longer ask you to believe my simple word, as in former years you would have done, I have deceived you too long, too culpably for that; but now, on my knees, solemnly, sacredly I swear, I will never marry without papa's and your consent. I dare no longer trust myself; I have once been rendered blind by that sinful craving for freedom from all authority, for unchecked independenee of thought and word and deed, and never, never more will I stand forth in my own weakness. My fate is in your hands, for never will I marry without your blessing; and may that vow be registered above as solemnly as it is now taken. Mother, you will not refuse to accept it," she added, laying her trembling hand on Mrs. Hamilton's, and gazing beseechingly in her face.

"I will not, my child;" and her mother struggled severely to conquer her emotion and speak calmly. "Tell me only it is in my affection you confide, that it is not under feelings of remorse alone you have made this solemn vow. Promise me you will no longer permit a doubt of my affection and interest in your happiness to enter your mind and poison your confidence in me, as it has done. From that doubt all the present misery has proceeded. You have imagined your parents harsh and cruel, while they have only thought of your welfare. Say only you will trust in our affection, my child, my own Caroline."

"Oh, that I had ever trusted in it. My blindness and folly concealed from me my misconduct, and bade me ascribe all my sufferings to you, on whom I have inflicted so much pain. Mother oh, forgive me, plead for me to papa. I know he is

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seriously displeased, he has every right to be so; but he knows not all I have endured, the agony of the last week. I deserve his severest reproaches, but my heart feels as if it would break beneath his anger now," and she laid her aching head on her mother's lap, and wept.

"My forgiveness, my blessing, are both yours, my own Do not weep thus," replied Mrs. Hamilton, imprinting a kiss on that burning forehead. "And your father too, when he has heard all, will not withhold his love."

"I will write to Lord Alphingham now, mother; it is useless to defer it, and my mind will not regain its peace till it is done," exclaimed Caroline, after a brief pause, which had followed her mother's words.

"Not now, my love, you are too agitated still," replied her mother, gazing anxiously on her flushed cheek; "wait till sleep shall have calmed this inward fever, and restored you to composure. I do not think you can write it now."

"I cannot sleep till I have, mamma, indeed I cannot. I ought to have left it for him before I quitted Airslie, but I could then think of nothing but the ardent longing to see you, to hear your voice again; let me write now."

And believing her words were true, that in all probability she would not sleep while that letter was on her mind, Mrs. Hamilton made no further objection, and rose to place the inkstand and portfolio on a table near her. Caroline remained still kneeling, and by her attitude Mrs. Hamilton fancied was engaged in secret prayer; her tears were checked as she rose, and it was with firmness she walked to the table and drew a seat beside it. Anxiously for a few minutes did her mother watch her as she wrote. At first her hand appeared to trem ble, but a successful effort conquered that emotion, and the increasing flush upon her cheek alone proclaimed the agitation of her mind. So deeply was she engrossed in her painful task, that she did not observe her mother had left the room, and remained absent for a few minutes, returning, however, before she had finished her letter. Without looking up, she placed the paper in Mrs. Hamilton's hands, and, leaning her arms on the tabie, buried her face in her hands.

Mrs. Hamilton folded the letter in perfect silence; but then taking the hand of her daughter from her eyes, she pressed it in hers, and said, in a voice of deep emotion—

"I am satisfied, my child. Let this letter be directed and sealed with your own hand, and the name of Lord Alphingham

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shall never again pass my lips. It is enough that duty and affection have triumphed over his intentions. I know not all the evil that might have been yours had he succeeded, but you are restored to me, and may God forgive him as freely as I do."

With a steady hand Caroline directed and placed her own seal to the letter; and then, exhausted by the agitation of that evening, she leaned her throbbing head against her mother.

"Caroline, my child!" exclaimed a deep and saddened voice beside her. She started, and looking up, beheld her father, who had been gazing at her an unobserved spectator for the last half hour.

Forgive me, dearest father. Oh, let me not sleep to-night without your forgiveness. Mamma will not cast me from her heart; she has blessed me, and I have injured her even more than you. Papa, dear papa, oh, speak to me but one word of fondness!" she entreated, as her father drew her to his bosom, and as she ceased, mingled his blessing and forgiveness in that warm embrace.

It was late, so late, that the early morn was beginning to gild the horizon before Mrs. Hamilton had seen her agitated child placed in bed, and persuaded her to compose her spirits and invite sleep. Fondly her mother watched beside her till the gray dawn had penetrated within the room; and then perceiving that calm sleep had come at length, she retired to her own apartment. There sinking on her knees, her overcharged heart found blessed relief in pouring forth to Heaven its fervent thanksgiving for that great mercy vouchsafed her in the restoration of her child. The anguish of the past, the suffering of the present were alike forgotten, in the thought that Caroline's affection and confidence were again restored to her. The veil had at length been removed from her eyes. Annie's character was revealed before her, and the sorrowful and repentant girl had once more sought for sympathy in the bosom of her mother. She now felt that mother was her truest friend, and a glow of sweet and soothing pleasure stole over Mrs. Hamilton's mind at this conviction. Caroline had said it was the recollection of her mother's care, devotion, and love that had stayed her, ere it was too late. She could not banish from her heart the duty therein so long and carefully implanted; the principles of religion, of virtue, shaken as they had been in that painful moment of indecision, had preserved her from misery. Often, very often, Mrs. Hamilton had felt disheartened, almost despairing in her task, during both the childhood

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and youth of Caroline, but now her recompense was apparent. Had she not persevered; had she been indolent or careless in the discharge of her duty, had she left the care of that child to strangers, who would never have thus studied or guided so difficult a disposition, there would have been naught to bid her pause. She would have done as others too often do, and fearful indeed would have been her chastisement. Now, what were all Mrs. Hamilton's self-conquering struggles, all the pain she had suffered, compared with the exquisite happiness of feeling that her care had preserved her child, and she knew not as yet from what depth of wretchedness? Fervent was the gratitude for that grace which had permitted her to guide her child aright; and as she recalled the heartfelt approbation of her conduct, which her beloved husband had gratefully expressed, happiness filled her heart, and many, very many might have envied that noble woman her feelings, as she laid her head on her pillow that night, when sleep only hushed the still lingering thanksgiving on her lips.

It may be well here briefly to relate all that had passed at Airslie, from the moment we left Caroline imploring pardon and guidance from Him, to whom she had never appealed in vain, to that when she so suddenly appeared in company with the Duchess in Berkeley Square. To accede to Lord Alpingham's wishes, she felt was no longer possible, but how to avoid him was a matter of still greater difficulty. To accompany the Duchess and thus elude him, she could not, for she felt neither her strength nor spirits could sustain her through the whole of that festive night. Each minute as it passed increased the fever of her brain, at length in despair she determined on the conduct with which we are already acquainted. As soon as the last carriage had rolled from the door she summoned Allison, the Duchess's own maid, and in accents that painfully betrayed the agitation within, implored her to procure her a carriage and fleet horses, as circumstances had occurred which obliged her instantly to return to town. She besought her neither to question her nor to speak of her sudden resolution to any one, as the note she would leave behind for her Grace would fully explain all. Allison remained for some few minutes gazing on the agitated girl, in motionless astonishment.

"Return to London at such a time of night, and alone," she rather allowed to drop from her lips than said, after a long pause.

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"Oh, would to heaven some one would go with me! but I know none whom I can ask," Caroline replied, in a tone of anguish, and seizing Allison's hand, again and again implored her assistance. Briefly she promised to do all she could for her, and left her, not to do her bidding by seeking some conveyance, but to report the strange request and still more alarming manner of Caroline to her Grace; who from some secret reason, which her daughters and friends in vain endeavored to solve, had at the very last moment declared her intention of not accompanying them, and wishing them, with the utmost kindness, a pleasant evening, commissioned Lady Lucy and her eldest brother, who had lately joined them, to supply her place in their own party, and to tender her excuses to the noble master of the *fête*. The simple truth was, that the penetration of the Duchess had observed and detected from the very first the manœuvres of Lord Alphingham and Caroline.

The former, as may have already been discovered, was one of those against whom her prejudice was very strong. With her own free will, Lord Alphingham would never have visited at her house, although she was never heard to breathe one word to his disadvantage; especially invited he never was, and in heart she was much annoyed at her husband's marked preference and encouragement of his society. She had observed her friend Mrs. Hamilton's coldness towards him; and as much as she admired the conduct of the mother, so she sometimes found herself mistrusting the studied air and guarded reserve with which Caroline ever treated the Viscount. The sudden change in Mr. Hamilton's manner had also struck her, and, therefore, when Alphingham joined her coterie, not once did she ever fail in the jealous watchfulness with which she regarded him and Caroline. Rendered suspicious by all that she had observed, Caroline's determination not to join the party that evening had increased her uneasiness to a degree that almost amounted to alarm, and at that very instant her resolution was fixed to remain at Airslie. She desired Allison not to mention her intention of remaining to Miss Hamilton, but to inform her minutely of all that passed during the evening; and her astonishment was almost as great as her domestic's had been when Caroline's desire was related to her.

It wanted but one-half hour to the time appointed by the Viscount, and Caroline still sat in a state of anxiety and suspense, which tortured her almost to frenzy. Unable to bear it longer, her hand was on the bell once more to summon Allison,

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when the lock of the door turned, and starting forwards, the words, "Is all ready—have you succeeded?" were arrested on her lips by the appearance of the Duchess herself, who, closing the door, stood gazing on the terrified girl with a glance of severity and command few could have met unmoved. Scarcely conscious of what she did, Caroline started back, and sinking on a stool at the farthest end of the room covered her face with her hands.

"May I know with what intent Miss Hamilton is about to withdraw herself from my roof and my protection?" she demanded, in those brief yet searching tones she ever used when displeased. "What reason she can allege for this unceremonious departure from a house where she has ever been regarded as one of its most favored inmates? Your mother trusted you to my care, and on your duty to her I demand an answer." She continued, after a brief pause, in which Caroline neither moved nor spoke, "Where would you go at this unseasonable hour?"

"Home to my mother," murmured the unhappy girl, in a voice almost inarticulate.

"Home!" repeated her Grace, in a bitterly satirical tone. "Strange, that you should thus suddenly desire to return. Were you not the child of those to whom equivocation is unknown, I might well doubt that tale;—home, and wherefore?"

"To save myself from the effects of my own sinful folly—my own infatuated madness," replied Caroline summoning with a strong effort all the energy of her character, and with a vehemence that flushed her palid cheek with crimson. "In this at least I am sincere, though in all else I deserve no longer to be regarded as the child of such noble-minded beings as are my parents. Spurn me from you as you will, this is no moment for equivocation and delay. I have deceived your Grace. I was about to bring down shame upon your house, to cause your indignant displeasure, my parents anguish, myself but endless, remorseful misery. To save all this, I would return home to implore the forgiveness, the protection of my parents; they alone can guard me from myself. Oh, if you ever loved my mother," she continued, starting up with agony, as the hour of nine chimed on her ear, "send some one with me, and let me go home. Half an hour more," and her voice grew almost inarticulate with suppressed emotion, "and it may be too late. Mother, mother, if I could but see you once again!"

"Before, as the wife or the victim of the Right Honorable

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Lord Alphingham, you fly from her for ever, and thus reward her cares, her love, her prayers, wretched and deceiving girl," sternly and slowly the Duchess said, as she rapidly yet with her usual majesty paced the room, and laid her hand heavily on Caroline's shoulder, as she sat bowed down with shame before her. "Deny it not; it was thus you would bring down shame on my home; thus create agony for your devoted parents; thus prove your gratitude, love, obedience, by wrenching every tie asunder. Oh, shame, shame! If this be the fruit of such tender cares, such careful training, oh, where shall we seek for honor and integrity—in what heart find virtue? And why not consummate your sin? why pause ere your noble and virtuous resolution was put in force? why hesitate in the accomplishment of your designs? Why not fly with your honorable lover, and thus wring the fond hearts of your parents at once to the utmost? Why retract now, when it will be only to delude again? Miserable and deluded girl, what new whim has caused this sudden change? Wherefore wait till it be too late to repent—to persuade us that you are an unwilling abettor and assistant in this man's schemes? Go, fly with him; it were better to reconcile your too indulgent mother to an eternal separation, than that she should take you once more to her heart, and be again deceived. Go, your secret is safe. How dare you speak of inflicting misery on your parents? Must not hypocrisy lurk in every word, when wilfully, recklessly, you have already abused their confidence and insulted their love? much more you cannot do." She paused, as if in expectation of a reply, but none came. Caroline's breaking heart had lost that proud spirit which, a few days before, would have called a haughty answer from her lips. She writhed beneath those stern unpitying accents, which perhaps in such a moment of remorseful agony might have been spared, but she replied not; and, after a brief silence, the Duchess again spoke.

"Caroline, answer me. What has caused this sudden change in your intentions? What has chanced between you and Lord Alphingham to demand this sudden longing for home? What impulse bids you thus elude him!"

"The memory of my mother's love," and Caroline raised her head, and pushing back her disordered hair, gazed upon the face of the Duchess with an expression of suffering few could have looked upon unmoved. "You are right, I have deceived my too indulgent parents, I have abused their confidence, insulted their love; but I cannot, oh, I cannot still those prin-

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ciples within me which they have implanted. In my hours of maddening folly I remembered them not; I believed they had gone from me for ever, and I should be happy. They have returned to torture me, to tell me that as the wife of Lord Alphingham, without the blessing of my parents, I shall be wretched. I have brought down endless misery on myself—that matters not; but oh, I will not cause them further suffering. I will no longer wring the heart of my gentle mother, who has so often prayed for her erring child. Too late, perhaps, I have determined, but the wife of Lord Alphingham I will never be; but his character is still dear to me, and I entreat your Grace not to withdraw your favor from him. He alone is not to blame, I also am culpable, for I acknowledge the encouragement I have given him. My character for integrity is gone, but his is still unstained."

"Fear not for him, my favor he has never had; but my honor is too dear to me for such an affair as this to pass my lips. Let him continue the courted, the spoiled, the flattered child of fashion he has ever been. I regard him not. Let him run his course rejoicing, it matters not to me." She rang the bell as she spoke, and slowly and silently paced the room till Allison obeyed the summons. "Desire James to put four swift horses to the chariot. Important business calls me instantly to London; bid him use dispatch, every moment is precious."

Allison departed, and the Duchess continued pacing the apartment till she returned, announcing the carriage as ready. A very few minutes sufficed for their personal preparations, for the Duchess to give peremptory orders to her trusty Allison to keep her departure a profound secret, as she should return before her guests were stirring the next morning, and herself account for Miss Hamilton's sudden return home. Few words were sufficient for Allison, who was in all respects well fitted for the situation she held near a person of the Duchess of Rothbury's character; and the carriage rolled rapidly from Airslie.

Not another word passed between the travelling companions. In feverish agitation on the part of Caroline, in cold, unbending sternness on that of the Duchess, their journey passed. To the imagination of the former, the roll of the carriage-wheels was the sound of pursuing horses; in every turn of the road her fevered fancy beheld the figure of Lord Alphingham: at one time glaring on her in reproachful bitter-

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ness, at another, in mockery, derision, satire; and when she closed her eyes, those visions still tormented, nor did they depart till she felt her mother's arm around her, her gentle voice pronounce her name.

True to her determination, the Duchess left London as early as six the following day, and, as usual, was the first within the breakfast-room, and little could her friends imagine that since they had left her the preceding evening she had made a journey to London and back. Caroline's indisposition, which had been evident for several days, although she had not complained till the day before, easily accounted for her return home, although the exact time of her doing so was known to none save her Grace herself; and even if surprise had been created, it would speedily have passed away in the whirl of amusements which surrounded them. But the courted, the admired, the fascinating Viscount no longer joined the festive group. His friend Sir Walter Courtenay accounted for and excused his absence, by stating that Lord Alphingham had received a disagreeable letter from an agent of his in Scotland, which demanded his instant presence; that he intended passing through London, thence proceed to the North, where, in all probability, he should await the hunting season, being engaged to join a large circle of noble friends.

It would be useless to linger on the impotent fury of Lord Alphingham when he discovered his well-conceived plans were utterly frustrated, and that his intended victim had eluded him, under the stern guardianship of the Duchess of Rothbury. In the first bitter moment of disappointment, he refused to accuse Caroline of any share in it, but believed their plans had been, by some unforeseen circumstance, discovered, and she had been forced to return home. If such were the case, he vowed to withdraw her from such galling slavery; he swore by some means to make her his own. But when her letter reached him, when he had perused its contents, and marked that not one word gave evidence of agitation of mind or unsteadiness of purpose, the current of his feelings changed. He cursed his own mad folly for thus seeking one, in whom from the first he might have seen there was no spirit, no quality suited to be his partner in a fashionable world; he vowed to think no more of a weak, capricious fool so he now termed the girl he had fancied that he loved. As may readily be imagined, he felt his self-love very deeply wounded by the complete frustration of his intentions, and being incapable of appreciating

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the better principles which had fortunately actuated the resolve of Caroline, a spirit of revenge entered his heart. He chrushed the letter in his hand, and paced the room in fury, and would have torn it to atoms, when the thought struck him, that by enclosing the letter to the confidant and adviser of his plans regarding Caroline, he might save himself the mortification of relating his defeat, and revenge himself effectually by exposing her to ridicule and contempt.

He wrote therefore a few concise lines, regretting, in a slightly satirical style, that Miss Grahame should have been so deceived with regard to the views and feelings of her friend Miss Hamilton, and referring her to the enclosed letter for all further explanation.

Annie received the packet at the time she was in daily expectation of the triumph of her schemes, the gratification of her dislike for the being whose gentle admonitions she so much resented, which had been dictated by Mrs. Hamilton's wish to increase the happiness of her parents and herself. Lord Alphingham had regularly informed her of all his intentions, and though Caroline had for some time entirely ceased to write, yet she suspected nothing like defeat. Already she secretly indulged in triumph, already anticipated the moment when every malignant wish would be fulfilled, and she should see the proud, cold, disdainful Mrs. Hamilton bowed down beneath the conduct of her child, humbled to the dust by the reflections which would be cast upon her when the elopement of Caroline should be made public; at that very time the letter of Lord Alphingham arrived, and told her of defeat, complete, irremediable. Scorn, bitter scorn curled her lip, as she glanced over Caroline's epistle, thus dishonorably transmitted for her perusal. Severe disappointment was for the time her portion, and yet, amid all these violent emotions, attendant on one of her disposition, there was one of a very different nature mingling with them, one that, while she resolved if she could not mortify Mrs. Hamilton as she had intended, she would yet do so by insinuations against Caroline's character, whenever she had an opportunity; would bid her rejoice, strangely rejoice, that she was not the wife of Lord Alphingham, that he was still free. While she looked forward to that letter announcing the union of the Viscount and Caroline, as placing the final seal on her triumphant schemes, we may well doubt if even that enjoyment, the exultations in the sufferings of another, would have stilled the anguish of her own heart, and permitted her to triumph

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as she intended to have done, when the man she loved was the husband of another. It was even so, though rendered by prejudice almost insensible to any thing but her hatred of Mrs. Hamilton.

Annie had not associated so intimately with Lord Alphingham without feeling the effect of his many fascinations; and, therefore, though both provoked and disappointed at this unlooked-for failure of her schemes, she was better enabled to overcome them. Resolving to leave her designs against the peace of Caroline and her mother henceforth to chance, all her energies were now put in action for the attainment of one grand object, to so work upon the disappointed Viscount as herself to take the place in his favor which Caroline had occupied. Her reply to his letter, which he had earnestly requested might enclose Caroline's, and be forwarded to him in London, was guarded, but artfully tending to inflame his indignation against Caroline; suppressing her own opinion on the subject, and exciting admiration of herself, and perhaps gratitude for her untiring sympathy in his welfare, which she ably contrived should breathe despondingly throughout. As that important affair, she added, was thus unhappily over, their correspondence she felt ought to cease, and she begged Lord Alphingham would write to her no more. She had braved remark when the happiness of two in whom she was so deeply interested was at stake; but as in that she had been disappointed, pain as it was for her to be the one to check a correspondence which could not fail to give her pleasure, being with one so enlightened, and in every way so superior as Lord Alphingham, she insisted that no more letters should pass between them. She gained her point; the Viscount wondered how he could ever be so blind as to prefer Caroline to her, and her words added weight to his resolution, to annoy the former by devoted attentions to Miss Grahame, and if it suited his interests, make the latter his wife.

The interviews Lord Alphingham contrived to have with Miss Grahame, before he retired to Scotland, which he did not do for a fortnight after his rejection, strengthened the intentions of both. The Viscount found new charms in the reserve and agitation which now marked Annie's behavior, in the faint voice and well-concealed intelligence, that however she might sympathise in his vexation, for herself she could not regret his freedom. All this, though they were scarcely ever alone, formed a perfect understanding between them, and

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quickly banished the image of Caroline from the vain and fickle-minded Alphingham.

Wishing to keep up her pretended friendship for Caroline, that she might the more effectually wound her, and not believing the sentiments of the misguided girl were changed towards her also, Annie called at Berkeley Square a very few days after Caroline's return, and she had become acquainted with all that had passed. No one was visible in the drawing-room; the young men, she knew, had both arrived from college, but the house was destitute of that air of cheerfulness and glee which generally attended their return. Some little time she waited with impatient displeasure, which did not lessen when, on hearing the door open, she beheld not Caroline but Mrs. Hamilton herself, her cheek pale, as if from some internal suffering, but with even more than her wonted dignity both in mien and step, and for a moment Annie struggled in vain to speak with the eagerness with which she intended to have inquired for Caroline; before the mild yet penetrating glance of Mrs. Hamilton even her self-possession appeared about to abandon her. She felt lowered, humbled in her presence, and it was this, perhaps, this very sense of inferiority, which had ever heightened dislike.

Mildly, yet coldly and briefly, Mrs, Hamilton answered Miss Grahame's torrent of questions and regrets which followed her information, that Caroline was not well enough to see any one but her own family, and that, as they left London some little time sooner than they had originally intended, she had begged her mother to tender her farewell. Annie expressed excessive sorrow, but no effort on either side was made to prolong this interview, and it was very quickly over. Annie returned home dissatisfied and angry, determining to make one attempt more; and if that failed, she thought she could as successfully wound by inuendoes and ridicule, should mere acquaintance take the place of intimate friendship.

Miss Grahame accordingly wrote in a truly heroic and highly-phrased style, regretting, sympathizing, and encouraging; but the answer, though guardedly worded, told her too plainly all her influence was over.

"I am not strong enough," wrote Caroline, "yet to argue with you, or defend my conduct, as I feel sure I should be compelled to do, did we meet now. I find, too late, that on many points we differ so completely, that the confidential intercourse, which has hitherto been ours, must henceforth be at

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an end. Forgive me, dear Annie, if it grieves you to read these words; believe me, it is painful to me to write them. But now that my feelings on so many important subjects have been changed—now that the blinding film has been mercifully removed from my eyes, and I see the whole extent of my sinful folly, I cannot hope to find the same friend in you. Too late, for my peace, I have discovered that our principles of duty are directly opposite. I blame you not for what I am, for the suffering I am still enduring, no, for that I alone have caused; but your persuasions, your representations heightened the evil, strengthened me in my sinful course. You saw my folly, and worked on it, by sowing the seeds of mistrust and dislike towards my parents. I was a passive tool in your hands, and you endeavored to mould me according to your notions of happiness. I thank you for all the interest you have thus endeavored to prove for me. You cannot regret withdrawing it, now I have in your eyes proved myself so undeserving. This is the last confidential letter I shall ever write, save to her who is indeed my best, my truest, most indulgent friend on earth; but before I entirely conclude, the love, the friendship, I have felt for you compels me to implore you to pause in your career. Oh, Annie, do not follow up those principles you would have instilled in me; do not, oh, as you value future innocence and peace, do not let them be your guide in life; you will find them hollow, vain, and false. Pause but for one moment, and reflect. Can there be happiness without virtue, peace without integrity? Is there pleasure without truth? Was deception productive of felicity to me? Oh, no, no. That visit to London, that introduction in the gay world, to which I looked forward with so much joy, the retrospection of which I hoped would have enlivened Oakwood, oh, what does it present? A dreary waste of life, varied only by remorse. Had my career been yours, you would perhaps have looked on it differently; but I cannot. Oh, Annie, once more, I beseech, let not such principles actuate your future conduct; they are wrong, they will lead to misery here, and what preparation are they for eternity?

"Farewell, and may God bless you! We shall not, perhaps, meet again till next season, and then it cannot be as we have parted. An interest in your welfare I shall ever feel, but intimacy must be at an end between us.

"CAROLINE"

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CHAPTER VIII.

THERE was a dark lowering frown obscuring the noble and usually open brow of the young heir of Oakwood, and undisguised anger visible in every feature and every movement, as he paced the library with disordered steps, about ten days after the events we have recorded, and three since his return from college. He had crossed his arms on his chest, which was swelling with the emotion he was with difficulty repressing, and his tall, elegant figure appeared to increase in height beneath his indignant, and, in this case, just displeasure.

Caroline's depression had not decreased since her brother's arrival. She felt she had been unjust to Percy, and a degree of coldness which had appeared at first in his conduct towards her, occasioned, though she knew it not, by her rejection of his friend St. Eval, which he believed was occasioned by her love of Alphingham, whom he fancied she still continued to regard with an eye of favor; both these causes created reserve and distance between the brother and sister, in lieu of that cordiality which had hitherto subsisted between them.

Percy had not been aware of all that had passed between the Viscount and Caroline till that morning, when Emmeline, hoping to soften his manner towards her sister, related, with all her natural eloquence, the Viscount's conduct, and the triumph of duty which Caroline had achieved. That he had even asked her of his father, Percy knew not till then, and it was this intelligence bursting on him at once which called forth such violent anger. Emmeline had been summoned away before she had time to note the startling effects of her words; but Herbert did, and though he was unacquainted with the secret cause of his brother's dislike towards Lord Alphingham, he endeavored by gentle eloquence to pacify and turn him from his purpose, at which he trembled.

"The villain," the cold-blooded, despicable villain!" muttered Percy at intervals, as he continued his hurried pace, without heeding, perhaps not hearing, Herbert's persuasive accents. "To act thus foully—to play thus on the unguarded feelings of a weak, at least, unsophisticated, unsuspecting girl—to gain her love, to destine her to ruin and shame, the heartless miscreant! Oh, that my promise prevented not my exposing him to the whole world; but there is another way—the villain shall find such conduct passes not unheeded!"

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"You are right, Percy," interposed Herbert, gently determining not to understand him. "If his conduct be indeed such as to call forth, with justice, this irritation on your part. his punishment will come at last."

"It shall come, ay, and by this hand!" exclaimed Percy, striking his clenched hand violently on the table; "if his conduct be such. You speak coolly, Herbert, but you know not all, therefore I forgive you: it is the conduct of a villain, ay, and he shall know it too. Before three suns have set again, he shall feel my sister has an avenger!"

"His schemes against the peace, the honor, of the innocent are registered on high; be calm, be satisfied, Percy. His last hour will be chastisement enough."

"By heaven, it shall be!" retorted Percy, passion increasing, it appeared, at every gentle word his brother spoke, and irritating him beyond control. "Herbert, you will drive me mad with this mistimed calmness; you know not half the injury she has received."

"Whatever might have been his schemes, they have all failed, Percy, and therefore should we not rather feel thankful for Caroline's restoration to her home, to herself, than thus encourage fury against him from whose snares she has escaped?"

"Yes; and though his base plan, thanks to my sister's strength of mind, or, rather, my mother's enduring counsel, has not succeeded, am I to sit calmly by and see her health, spirits, alike sinking beneath that love which the deceiving villain knew so well how to call forth? am I to see this, to gaze on the suffering he has caused, unmoved, and permit him to pass unscathed, as if his victim had neither father nor brother to protect and avenge her injured honor?"

"Her honor is not injured. She is as innocent and as pure as before Lord Alphingham addressed her. Percy, you are increasing this just displeasure, by imaginary causes. I do not believe it to be love for him that occasions her present suffering; I think, from the conversations we have had, it is much more like remorse for the past, and bitter grief that the confidence of our parents must, spite of their excessive kindness, be for a time entirely withdrawn, not any lingering affection for Alphingham."

"Whatever it be, he is the primary cause. Not injured! every word of love from his lips is pollution; his asking her of my father an atrocious insult; his endeavors to fly with her a deadly sin—an undying stain."

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Herbert shuddered involuntarily.

"What would you say, or mean?" he exclaimed. "What have you heard or known concerning him, that calls for words like these?

"Ask me not as you love me; it is enough I know he is a villain," and Percy continued his rapid walk. Herbert rose from his seat and approached him.

"Percy," he said, "my dear brother, tell me what is it you would do? to what would this unwonted passion lead? Oh, let it not gain too great a dominion, Percy. Dear Percy, what would you do?"

"I would seek him, Herbert," replied Percy, "wherever he is; by whom surrounded. I would taunt him as a deceiving, heartless, villain, and if he demand satisfaction, by heaven, it would be joy for me to give it!"

"Has passion, then, indeed obtained so much ascendency, it would be joy for you to meet him thus for blood?" demanded Herbert, fixing his large, melancholy eyes intently on Percy's face, on which the cloud was becoming darker, and his step even more rapid. "Would you seek him for the purpose of exciting anger like your own? is it thus you would avenge my sister?"

"Thus, and only thus," answered Percy, with ungoverned fury. "As others have done; man to man I would meet him, and villain as he is, I would have honorable vengeance for the insult, not only to my sister, but to us all. Why should I stay my hand?"

"Why? because on you more than on many others has the light of our blessed religion dawned," answered Herbert, calmly; "because you know what others think not of, that the law of our Master forbiddeth blood; that whosoever sheds it, on whatever plea, his shall be demanded in return; because you know, in seeking vengeance by blood, His law is disobeyed, and His vengence you would call upon yourself. Percy, you will not, you dare not act as this overwhelming passion dictates."

"Dare not," repeated the young man, light flashing from his eye as if his spirit chafed at that word, even from his brother, "dare not; you mistake me, Herbert. I will not sit tamely down beneath an injury such as this. I will not see that villain triumph without one effort to prove to him that he is known, and make the whole world know him as he is."

"And would a hostile meeting accomplish this? Would

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that proclaim his villainy, of whatever nature it may be, to the world? Would they not rather side with him, their present minion, and even bring forward your unjustifiable conduct as a fresh proof in his favor? How would they give credit to the terms they may hear you apply to him, when even in your own family you speak not of the true cause of this strange agitation and indignant anger."

Percy continued to pace the room for some minutes without answering.

"My honor has been insulted in the person of my sister." he muttered, at length, as if speaking more to himself than to his brother; "and am I to bear that calmly? Were the truth made known, would not the whole world look on me with scorn as a spiritless coward, to whom the law of honor was as nothing; who would see his sister suffering from the arts of a miscreant, without one effort to revenge her."

"The law of honor," replied Herbert, bitterly; "it is the law of blood, of murder, of wilful uncalled-for murder. Percy, my brother, banish these guilty thoughts. Do not be one of those misguided beings who, from that false deceiving plea, the law of honor, condemn whole families to misery, and themselves, without preparation, without prayer, nay in the very act of disobeying a sacred commandment of their God, rush heedless into His presence, into awful eternity."

He paused, but not vainly had he spoken. Percy gazed on his brother's features with greater calmness, and more kindly, but still impetuously, said—

"Would you have me then stand calmly by, and behold my sister a suffering victim to his arts, though actual sin, thank God has been spared, and thus permit that villain Alphingham, to continue his course triumphant?"

"Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and I will repay it," answered Herbert, instantly, twining his arm within that of his brother, and looking up in his face with that beseeching glance of affection which was so peculiar to his features. "Dear brother, rest on those words and be contented. It is not for us to think of vengeance or to seek for retribution; justice is, indeed, ours to claim, but in this case, there is no point on which we can demand it. Let Alphingham, even granting you know him as he is, pursue his course in peace. Did you endeavor to inflict chastisement, is it not doubting the wisdom and justice of the Almighty? And suppose you fell instead of your adversary, in the meeting you would seek—what, think

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you, would be the emotions of all those who so dearly love you, when they gazed on your bleeding corse, and remembered you had sought death in defiance of every principle they had so carefully instilled? Think of my mother's silent agony; has not Caroline's conduct occasioned sufficient pain, and would you increase it? you, whose most trifling action is dictated by love for her; you, in whom she has every reason to look for so much virtue, honor, and self-control; whom she so dearly, so devotedly loves? Remember what she would feel; and, if no other consideration have effect, surely that will bid you pause."

Percy still paced the room, but his head was averted from his brother as he spoke, and his step bespoke contending and painful emotions. He did not answer when Herbert ceased to speak, but his brother knew him well, and remained silent.

"You have conquered, Herbert," he exclaimed at length, firmly clasping his brother's hand in his and raising his head; anger still lingered on his cheek, but his eye was softer. "I could not bear my mother's wretchedness; I could not thus repay her love, her cherished care. I will not seek this base and heartless man. I tremble for my present resolution, if he chance to cross my path; but, for her sake, I will avoid him; for her sake, his villainy shall be still concealed."

"Endeavor to think of him more charitably, my dear Percy, or forget him entirely, which you will."

"Think of him charitably; him—a fashionable, fawning, seducing hypocrite!" burst from Percy, in a tone of renewed passion. "No! the gall he has created within me cannot yet be turned to sweetness; forget him—that at least is impossible, when Caroline's coldness and reserve remind me disagreeably of him every day. It is plain she looks on me as the destroyer of her happiness; thinks, perhaps, had it not been for my letter my father would have given his consent, and she might have peacefully become the wife of Alphingham. It is hard to bear unkindness from one whom I have endeavored to preserve from ruin."

"Nay, do not be unjust, Percy; are you not cool and reserved yourself? How do we know why Caroline is somewhat more so than usual? Poor girl, we may find excuses for her, but I know no reason why you should treat her as you do."

"Her whole conduct demands it. How did she use that noble fellow St. Eval; encourage him, so that their union was confidently asserted, and then reject him for no cause whatever; or, if she had a cause, for love of a villain, who, it ap

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pears, in secret, possessed all the favor she pretended to lavish on St. Eval,—both false and deceiving."

"Percy you are determined to be angry with every body to-day. I flattered myself my influence had allayed your passion, and behold, it is only withdrawn from one object to be hurled upon another. Can you not find some good cause now to turn it from Caroline on me? Is it nothing that I should dare face the tempest of your wrath, and tell my impetuous and headstrong brother exactly what I thought—nothing, that I should have ventured to say there was a thing on earth you dared not do?'

Percy turned sharply towards him, as if in that moment he could be angry even with him; but Herbert met his fierce glance with a smile so full of affectionate interest, that all Percy's displeasure and irritation seemed at once removed.

"Displeased with you!" exclaimed Percy, when involuntary admiration had taken the place of anger, and unconsciously the noble serenity of Herbert's temper appeared to soothe the more irritable nature of his own. "Ay, Herbert, when we two have exchanged characters, such may be, till then I am contented to love and reverence the virtue, the gentleness I cannot make my own."

"We are better thus, my brother," replied Herbert, feelingly; were we the same, could I have been the happy being you have made me at college? Much, very much happiness do I owe to your high spirit, Percy. Without your support, my life, spite of the charms of study, would have been a painful void at college; and though I feel, you know not perhaps how often and how bitterly, that in many things I cannot hope to be your companion, yet to think my affection may sometimes check the violence that would lead you wrong, oh, that is all I can hope for or desire."

"Have you not my love, my confidence, my fondest, warmest esteem?" exclaimed Percy, impetuously, and twining his arm, as in fondness he often did, around his brother's neck. "Is there one among my gay companions I love as you, though I appear to seek their society more?"

Herbert was silent.

"You do not doubt me, Herbert?"

"Percy—no!" exclaimed the youth, with unwonted ardor. To speak more at that moment he could not, and ere words came at his command, the library door slowly opened, and Caroline languidly entered.

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Herbert somewhat hurriedly left the room, to conceal the agitation the interview with Percy had occasioned him.

For some little time Caroline remained in the library, seeking, it appeared, a book, without a word passing between her and Percy. Both evidently wished to speak, but neither liked to begin; at length Caroline approached him.

"Percy," she began, and her voice trembled sufficiently to prevent more. Percy was softened.

"Well, dear Caroline, am I so very terrible you cannot speak to me? I have been angry and unjust, and you, perhaps, a little too reserved; so now let us forgive and forget, as we did when we were children, and be friends for the future."

He spoke with all his natural frankness, and extended his hand towards her. Caroline's spirits were so depressed, that the least word or token of kindness overcame her, and pressing her brother's hand in both hers, she turned away her head to conceal the quickly-starting tears, and Percy continued, trying to smile—

"Well, Caroline, will you not tell me what you were going to say? I cannot quite penetrate your thoughts."

Again Caroline hesitated, but then with an effort she said, fixing her heavy eyes on her brother's face—

"Percy, had you a real cause for writing to my father as you did some few weeks ago or was it rumor alone which actuated your doing so? I implore you to answer me truly."

"I had all-sufficient cause," he answered, instantly. "It was from no rumor. Do you think that, without good reason, I would have endeavored to traduce the character of any man?"

"And what was that cause? Why did you implore my father, as he valued my future peace, not to expose me to his fascinations?"

Caroline spoke slowly and deliberately, as if every word were weighed ere it was uttered, but with an expression on her features, as if life and peace depended on his answer.

Percy looked earnestly at her.

"Why should you ask this question, my dear sister?" he said. "If I answer it, what good will it do? Why should I solve a mystery, that, if you love this Alphingham, as this extreme depression bids me believe, must bring but increase of pain?"

"Percy," replied Caroline, raising her head, and standing

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with returning dignity before him, "Percy, do not let the idea of my love bid you hesitate. Increase of pain I do not think is possible; but yet, do not mistake me, that pain does not spring from disappointed affection. Percy, I do not love Lord Alphingham; I have been fascinated, and the remembrance of the past still clings to me with remorse and suffering; but I never loved him as, had I not been infatuated and blind, had I not rejected the counsels and confidence of my mother, I might have loved another. You know not how I have been led on, how I have permitted myself to be but a tool in the hands of those whose independence I admired, and aided them by my own reckless folly—the wish to prove, however differently I was educated, still I could act with equal spirit. Had it not been for that self-will, that perverse spirit, I might now have been a happy and a virtuous wife, loving and esteeming that superior being, whose affections I wilfully cast away; but that matters not now," she added, hurriedly. "My mother was right, I was unworthy to share his lot; but of this rest assured, I do not love, I never have loved, for I cannot esteem Lord Alphingham."

"But why then wish to know more concerning him?" Percy said, much relieved by his sister's words, and more pleased than he chose to appear by her allusion to St. Eval. "Is it not enough your connection with him is entirely broken off?"

"No, Percy; I have rejected him, dissolved our engagement, I scarcely know wherefore, except that I felt I could not be his without my father's consent; but there are times I feel as if I had treated him unjustly, that I have had no cause to think ill of him; my conduct had encouraged him. To me he has been devoted and respectful, and though I could not, would not be his wife, yet these thoughts linger on my mind, and add most painfully to the chaos already there."

Twice Percy slowly traversed the room, with a countenance on which anxious thought was deeply imprinted. He paused opposite to Caroline, took both her hands in his, and spoke in a voice which, though low, was so solemn that it thrilled to her inmost soul.

"Caroline, I had hoped the fatal secret made known to me would never have passed my lips, but for the restoration of your peace it shall be divulged, nor will the injured one who first intrusted it to me, to preserve you from ruin, believe I have betrayed her trust. You have not suspected the whole

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extent of evil that would have been yours, had you indeed fled with that hypocritical villain. Caroline, Lord Alphingham is a married man—his wife still lives!"

Had a thunderbolt fallen at her feet, or the earth yawned beneath her, not more pale or transfixed would Caroline have stood than she did as those unexpected words fell clear and shrill as a trumpet-blast upon her tortured ear. Amid all her conjectures as to the meaning of Percy's words, this idea had never crossed her mind; that Alphingham could thus have deliberately been seeking her ruin, under the guise of love and honor, was a stretch of villany that entered not into her conception. Now that the truth was known, she stood as if suddenly turned to marble, her cheek, her very lips bearing the color of death. Then came the thoughts of the past; had it not been for those recollections of her childhood, her mother's love, devotion, what would she now have been? In vain she struggled to bear up against that rushing torrent of thought; every limb was seized with violent trembling, her brain reeled, and she would have sunk to the ground, had not Percy, alarmed at the effects of his words, led her tenderly to a seat, and kneeling by her side, threw his arms around her. Her head sunk on his shoulder, and she clung to him as if evil and guilt and wretchedness still hovered like fiends around her, and he would protect her from them all. Fire again flashed from the eyes of the young man as he thought on Alphingham, but for her sake he restrained himself, and endeavored by a few sooth ing words to calm her.

"Tell me all—all you know, I can bear it," she said at length, almost inaudibly, and looking up with features as death-like as before. Percy complied with her request, and briefly related as follows:

He had become acquainted during his college life, he told her, with a widow and her daughter, who lived about four or five miles from Oxford. Some service he had rendered them, of sufficient importance as to make him an ever welcome and acceptable guest within the precincts of that cottage, which proclaimed a refined and elevated taste, although its inmates were not of the highest class. Both, Percy fancied were widows, although he scarcely knew the foundation of that fancy, except the circumstance of their living together, and the husband of the younger lady never appearing; nor was his name ever mentioned in the confidential conversations he sometimes had with them, which the service he had had in his power to

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do demanded. Mrs. Amesfort, the daughter, still possessed great beauty, which a shade of pensive thought, sometimes amounting to deep melancholy, rendered even more lovely. Her age might have been six or seven and twenty, she could not have been more. At an earlier age, there was still evidence that she had been a sparkling, lively girl, and her mother would frequently relate to the young man the change that sorrow—and sorrow, she hinted, of a peculiarly painful nature—had made in one who, ten years previous, had been so full of life and glee. Decline, slow but sure, it seemed even to Percy's inexperienced eye, was marked on her pale features; and at those times when bodily suffering was greatest, her spirit would resume a portion of its former lightness, as if it rejoiced in the anticipated release. There was a deep thrilling melody in her voice, whether in speaking, or, when strength allowed, in warbling forth the pathetic airs of her native land; for Agnes Amesfort was a child of Erin, once enthusiastic, warm, devoted, as were her countrywomen—possessing feelings that even beneath that pale, calm exterior would sometimes burst forth and tinge her cheek, and light up her soul-speaking eye with momentary but brilliant radiance, and whispered too clearly what she once had been, and what was now the wreck.

The gayety, the frankness, and unassuming manner of Percy rendered him a most acceptable visitant at Isis Lodge, so the cottage was called; he was ever ready with some joyous tale, either of Oxford or of the metropolis, to bring a smile even to the lips of Mrs. Amesfort. It was not likely that he should so frequently visit the cottage without exciting the curiosity and risibility of his college companions; but he was enabled cheerfully and with temper to withstand it all, feeling secure in his own integrity, and confident that the situation in which he stood relative to the inmates of that cottage was mutually understood. Several inquiries Percy made concerning these interesting females, but no intelligence of their former lives could he obtain; they had only settled in the cottage a few months previous to the period of his first acquaintance with them; and whence they came, and who they were, no one knew nor cared to know. It was enough for the poor, for many miles round, that the assistance of the strangers was extended towards them with kind words, and consolation in their troubles; and for the Oxonians, that though they received with extreme and even grateful politeness the visits made them, they were never returned.

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One little member of this small family Percy had not mentioned, a little girl, who might have been about eight or nine years old, an interesting child, whom Percy had saved from a watery grave in the rapid Isis, which rolled at the base of the grounds; a child, in whom the affections of her widowed mother were centered with a force and intensity, that it appeared death itself could but divide; and she was, indeed, one to love—affectionate and full of glee; yet the least sign of increased suffering on the part of her mother would check the wild exuberance of childish spirits, without diminishing in the least her cheerfulness, and she would throw her arms around her neck, and fondly ask, if she might by kisses while away the pain. Many a game of play did she have with her preserver, whose extreme kindness and excessive liveliness excited the affections of the child, and increased and preserved the gratitude his courageous conduct had occasioned in the bosom of that young, devoted mother, whose every earthly joy was centred in her fatherless child.

It happened, that in speaking one day of London society, and of the reigning belles and beaux of the season, that Percy casually mentioned the name of Lord Alphingham, whom he declared was by all account so overwhelmed with attentions and flatteries, since his return from a nine years' residence on the Continent, that there was every chance of his being thoroughly spoiled, if he were not so already, and losing every grain of sense, if he had any to lose. He was surprised, as he spoke, at the very visible agitation of the elder lady, whose color went and came so rapidly, that involuntarily he turned towards her daughter, wondering if any such emotion were visible in her; and though she did not appear paler than usual, nor was any outward emotion visible, save that her arm was somewhat tightly bound round the tiny figure of the little Agnes, he almost started as he met those large soft eyes fixed full upon him, as if they would penetrate his soul; and though her voice was calm, unhesitating, and firm, as she asked him if he were acquainted with Lord Alphingham, yet its tones sounded even more thrilling, more sadly than usual. He answered truly in the negative, adding, he was not ambitious of his acquaintance; as a man, he was not one to suit his fancy. Many questions did Mrs. Amesfort ask relative to this nobleman, and still unconsciously her arm held her child more closely to her side. The elder lady's looks were bent on them both, expressive, it seemed to Percy, of fondness for those two beloved objects, and struggling with indignation towards another.

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Percy returned to college that evening unusually thoughtful. What could Lord Alphingham have to do with the inhabitants of that simple cottage? Incoherent fancies occupied his mind, but from all which presented themselves as solutions to the mystery his pure mind revolted; and, compelled by an impulse he could not resist, he continued to speak of Alphingham every time he visited the cottage;—Mrs. Amesfort, it appeared to him, rather encouraging than checking his conversation on that subject, by introducing it herself, and demanding if his name were still mentioned in Percy's letters from town. Mrs. Morley, her mother, ever looked anxiously at her, as it she could have wished the subject unnamed; but still Alphingham continued to be the theme so constantly discussed at Isis Lodge, that Percy felt no repugnance in mentioning those reports which allied his sister's name with that of the Viscount. Again were the eyes of Mrs. Amesfort fixed intently on his face, and she spoke but little more during that evening's visit. Percy left her, unable to account for the deep and serious thought imprinted on her features, nor the look with which she bade him seek her the following day at an appointed hour, as she earnestly wished to speak with him alone. The day passed heavily till he was again with her. She was alone; and steady determination more than ever marked on her clear and polished brow. She spoke, and Percy listened, absorbed; she alluded to his preservation of her child, and, in that moment of reawakened gratitude, all the enthusiasm of her country spoke in her eyes and voice; and then a moment she paused, and a bright and apparently painful flush mounted to those cheeks which Percy had ever seen so pale. She implored his forbearance with her; his pardon at what might appear an unwarrantable interference on her part in the affairs of his family; but his many and eloquent descriptions of them, particularly of his mother, had caused an interest that compelled her to reveal a fatal secret which, she had hoped, would never have passed her lips. Was it a mere rumor, or were Lord Alphingham's attentions marked and decided towards his sister? Percy believed there was very good foundation for the rumors he had heard.

Did his parents approve of it? she again asked, and the flush of excitement faded. Percy was not quite sure; he rather thought by his mother's letters she did not, though Caroline was universally envied as an object of such profound attention from one so courted and admired. Did his sister love

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him?—the words appeared wrung with a violent effort from Mrs. Amesfort's lips.

He did not fancy she did as yet; but he doubted not the power of Alphingham's many fascinations and exclusive devotion to herself, on one naturally rather susceptible to vanity as was Caroline.

"Oh, if you love your sister, save her ere it be too late, ere her affections are engaged," was Mrs. Amesfort's reply, with a burst of emotion, the more terrible, from its contrast with her general calm and unmoved demeanor. "Expose her not to those fascinations which I know no heart can resist. Let her not associate with him—with my husband; he is not free to love—I am his lawful wife; and the child you saved is his—his own—the offspring of lawfully-hallowed wedlock; though he has cast me off, though his eyes have never gazed upon my child, yet, yet we are his. No cruel words of separation has the law of England spoken. But do not, oh! if you have any regard for me," she continued, wildly seizing both Percy's hands, as she marked the dark blood of passion kindling on the young man's brow, "do not betray him; do not let him know that his wife—his injured wife—has risen to cry shame upon him, and banish him from those circles wherein he is formed to mingle. Promise me faithfully, solemnly, you will not betray my secret more than is necessary to preserve your sister from misery and ruin. I thought even for her I could not have spoken thus, but I gazed on my child, and remembered she too has a mother, whose happiness is centred in her as mine is in my Agnes, and I could hesitate no more. Promise me you will not abuse my confidence, Mr. Hamilton, promise me; let me not have the misery of reproaches from him to whom my fond heart still clings, as it did at first. Yes; though for nine long weary years I have never seen his face nor heard his voice, still he knows not, guesses not how his image dwells within, how faithfully, how fervidly he is still beloved. Promise me my existence shall not be suspected, that neither he nor any one shall know the secret of my existence. It is enough for me he lives, is happy. My child! could I but see her in the station her rank demands,—but, oh, I would not force her on her father."

She would still have spoken, still have entreated, but this unwonted emotion had exhausted her feeble strength. Greatly moved by this extraordinary disclosure, and struck with that deep devotedness, that undying love, Percy solemnly pledged his word to preserve her secret.

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"My course will soon be over, my sand run out," she said, after energetically thanking him for his soothing and relieving words, and in a tone of such sad, resigned hopelessness, that, irritated as he felt towards Alphingham, his eye glistened and his lips quivered. "And wherefore should I dash down his present enjoyment by standing forward and proclaiming myself his wife? Why should I expose my secret sorrows, my breaking heart, to the inspection of a cold and heartless world, and draw down on my dying moments his wrath, for the poor satisfaction of beholding myself recognized as Viscountess Alphingham? Would worldly honors supply the place of his affection? Oh, no, no! I am better as I am. The tears of maternal and filial love will hallow my grave; and he, too, when he knows for his sake, to save him a pang, I have suffered my heart to break in uncomplaining silence, oh, he too may shed one tear, bestow a thought on one who loved him to the last!"

"But your child!" exclaimed Percy, almost involuntarily.

"Will be happier here, under my mother's care, unconscious of her birth, than mingling in a dangerous world, without a mother to cherish and protect her. Her father might neglect, despise her; she might be a bar to a second and a happier union, and, oh, I could not die in peace did I expose her thus."

Percy was silent, and when the interview had closed, he bade that devoted woman farewell, with a saddened and deeply thoughtful brow.

Lord Alphingham had been a student in Dublin, in the environs of which city dwelt Mrs. Morley, a widow, and this her only child. At their cottage he became a constant and devoted guest, and, as might have been expected, his impetuous and headstrong nature became desperately enamored of the beautiful and innocent Agnes, then only seventeen. Spite of his youth, being barely twenty, neither mother nor daughter could withstand his eloquent solicitations, and a private but sacred marriage was performed. He quitted college, but still lingered in Ireland, till a peremptory letter from his father summoned him to England, to celebrate his coming of age. He left his bride, and the anguish of parting was certainly at that time mutual. Some few months Agnes hoped for and looked to his return. Alphingham, then Lord Amesfort, on his part, was restrained only by the fear of the inveteracy of his father's disposition from confessing his marriage, and sending for his

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wife. Another bride, of rank and wealth, was proposed to him, and then he confessed the truth. The fury of the old man knew no bounds, and he swore to disinherit his son, if he did not promise never to return to his ignoble wife, whom he vowed he never would acknowledge. Amesfort promised submission, fully intending to remain constant till his father's death, which failing health proclaimed was not far distant, and then seek his gentle wife, and introduce her in her proper sphere. He wrote to this effect, and the boding heart of Agnes sunk at once; in vain her mother strove to rouse her energies, by alluding to the strain of his letter, the passionate affection breathing in every line, the sacred nature of his promise. She felt her doom, and ere her child was six months old, her feelings, ominous of evil, were fully verified.

Lord Alphingham lingered some time, and his son found, in the society in which the Viscount took good care he should continually mingle, attractions weighty enough to banish from his fickle heart all love, and nearly all recollection of his wife. He found matrimony would be very inconvenient in the gay circle of which he was a member. All the better feelings and qualities of his youth fled; beneath the influence of example and bad companionship his evil ones were called forth and fostered, and speedily he became the heartless libertine we have seen him. His letters to the unfortunate Agnes were less and less frequent, and at length ceased altogether, and the sum transmitted for her use every year was soon the only proof that he still lived. His residence in foreign lands, the various names he assumed, baffled all her efforts at receiving the most distant intelligence concerning him, and Agnes still lingered in hopeless resignation—"The heart will break, but brokenly live on;" and thus it was she lived, existing for her child alone. Nine years they had been parted, and Agnes had ever shrunk in evident pain from quitting her native land, and that cottage which had been the scene of her brief months of happiness; but when change of air was pleaded in behalf of her child, then suffering from lingering fever, when change of climate was strongly recommended by the physicians, in secret for herself equally with that of her little girl, she hesitated no longer, and a throb of mingled pain and pleasure swelled her too fond heart as her foot pressed the native land of her husband. Some friends of her mother, unacquainted with her sad story, resided near Oxford, and thither they bent their steps, and finally fixed their residence, where Mrs. Amesfort soon

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had the happiness of beholding her child restored to perfect health and radiant in beauty; perhaps the faint hope that Alphingham might one day unconsciously behold his daughter, reconciled her to this residence in England. She was in his own land; she might hear of him, of his happiness; and, deeply injured as she was, that knowledge, to her too warm, too devoted heart, was all-sufficient.

Such were the particulars of the story which Percy concisely yet fully related in confidence to his sister. Caroline neither moved nor spoke during his recital; her features still retained their deadly paleness, and her brother almost involuntarily felt alarmed. A few words she said, as he ceased, in commentary on his tale, and her voice was calm. Nor did her step falter as she quitted the library, and returned to her own room, when, carefully closing the door, she sunk on the nearest seat, and covering her eyes with her hands, as if to shut out all outward objects, gave unchecked dominion to the incongruous thoughts occasioned by Percy's tale. She could not define or banish them; a sudden oppression appeared cast upon her brain, deadening its powers, and preventing all relief from tears. The ruin, the wretchedness from which she had been mercifully preserved stood foremost in her mind, all else appearing a strange and frightful dream. The wife and child of Alphingham flitted like mocking phantoms before her eyes, and the countenance of Alphingham himself glared at her, and his gibing laugh seemed to scream in her ears, and transform him into a malignant fiend revelling in the misery he had created. She strove to pray, but vainly; no words of such soothing and consoling import rose to her lips. How long she remained in this state of wretchedness she knew not, but it was the mild accents of her mother's voice that roused her from her trance.

"Are you not well, Caroline? What is the matter, love?" Mrs. Hamilton asked, alarmed at the icy coldness of her daughter's hand, and kissing, as she spoke, her pallid cheek.

Caroline threw her arms round her, and a violent flood of tears relieved the misery from which she was suffering so painfully.

"Do not ask me to reveal the cause of this weakness, my dearest mother," she said, when voice returned. "I shall be better now, and never, never again shall recollections of the past, by afflicting me, cause you solicitude. Do not fancy this apparent grief has any thing to do with regret at my late de

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cision, or for still lingering affection; oh, no, no. Do not look at me so anxiously, mother; I have had a long, long conversation with Percy, and that has caused the weakness you perceive; but it will soon pass away, and I shall be your own happy Caroline again."

Tears were still stealing from those bloodshot eyes; but she looked up in Mrs. Hamilton's face with an expression of such confiding affection, that her mother's anxious fears were calmed. She would not inquire more, nor question Percy, when he sought her in her boudoir before dinner, to request that no notice might be taken, if his sister's manner were that evening less calm than usual. Mrs. Hamilton felt thankful that an understanding had taken place between her children, whose estrangement had been a source of severe pain, and she waited trustingly and calmly for time to do its work on the torn heart and agitated nerves of Caroline.

To Emmeline's extreme delight, preparations for their departure from London and return to Oakwood were now proceeding in good earnest. Never did that fair and innocent face look more joyous and animated, and never had her laugh been more glad and ringing than when the carriage rolled away from Berkeley Square. Every circumstance of their journey increased their childlike glee, every town they passed through was an object of interest, and even the pensive features of her cousin Ellen reflected her unchecked joyousness. They seldom travelled more than forty miles a day, and consequently it was not till the evening of the fourth they neared the village, whose inhabitants, clad in holiday attire, stood at the doors of their houses to receive them, with silent and respectful yet very evident tokens of joy. The evening was most lovely; the sun had lost the splendor of its beams, though clouds of every brilliant hue proclaimed the increased glory which attended its hour of rest, at times lost behind a richly glowing cloud, and then bursting forth again and dyeing all nature with a flood of gold. The river lay calmly sleeping before them, while on its glassy bosom the heavens cast their radiance, relieved by the shade of the mighty trees that stood to guard its banks; the rich foliage of the trees, the superb green of the fields, in some of which the ripening corn was beginning to stud with gold the varied flowers gemming the fertile hedge, the holy calmness of this summer eve, all called forth the best feelings of the human heart. For a few minutes even Emmeline was silent, and then her clear silvery voice was

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heard chanting, as if by an irresistible impulse, the beautiful hymn of the Tyrolese, so peculiarly appropriate to the scene. On, on they went, the white walls of the church peeping through clustering ivy; the old and venerable rectory next came in sight; a few minutes more, and the heavy gates of Oakwood were thrown wide to receive them, and the carriages swept along the well-known entrance. Every tree and shrub, and even flower, was now looked on by Emmeline and Percy with increased and somewhat boisterous expressions of delight.

"Try if you cannot be still a very short time longer, dear Emmeline," whispered the more restrained Ellen, whose eye had caught a glimpse of Caroline's countenance, and who perceived in an instant her feelings were not in unison with Emmeline's. She was right; Caroline could not feel as did her sister. She was not the same light-hearted, innocent being she had been when she quitted Oakwood; the appearance of the home of her childhood vividly recalled all that had occurred since she had mingled in the world, that world of which she had indulged so many brilliant visions; and while Emmeline's laugh conveyed gladness in that hour to all who heard it, Caroline leaned forward to conceal from her companions the tears that stole silently down her cheek.

A shout from Percy proclaimed the old hall in sight. A group of domestics stood on the steps, and the setting sun threw its brilliant hues on the mansion, as if with increased and unusual lustre that venerable spot should welcome the return of the Hamilton family within its sheltering walls.

CHAPTER IX.

"THERE wants but the guardian spirit of yon old Manor to render this scene as perfect as her society would bid the present hours roll on in unalloyed felicity to me," was Herbert Hamilton's observation some little time after their return to Oakwood, as he stood, arm in arm with his friend Arthur Myrvin, on the brow of a hill which overlooked, among other beautiful objects, Greville Manor, now inhabited by strangers.

Young Myrvin smiled archly, but ere their walk that evening was concluded, he too had become interested in the being so dear to his friend; for Herbert spoke in perfect confidence, secure of friendly sympathy. Oakwood was to him as dear, perhaps even dearer than to Emmeline, for his nature and

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tastes were not such as any amusement in London could gratify. His recreation from the grave studies necessary for the profession which he had chosen, was to wander forth with a congenial spirit, and marking Nature in all her varied robes, adore his Creator in His works as well as in His word. In London his ever active mind longed intensely to do good, and his benevolent exertions frequently exceeded his strength; it was his chief delight to seek the dwellings of the poor, to relieve distress, alleviate affliction. The prisoner in his cell, the bold and wilful transgressor of the laws of God, these would he teach, and by gentle admonitions bring nearer to the Throne of Grace. Yet notwithstanding the gratification which the pursuits of Herbert gave to his parents, they often felt considerable anxiety lest his health should suffer from his unceasing efforts, and they rejoiced on that account when their removal to Oakwood afforded their son a quieter and more healthful field of occupation. For miles around Oakwood the name of Herbert Hamilton was never spoken without a blessing. There he could do good; there he could speak of God, and behold the fruits of his pious labors; there was Mr. Howard ever ready to guide and to sympathize, and there was the field of Nature spread before him, to fill his heart with increased and glowing adoration and reverential love.

It was well for Herbert his parents were such as could understand and sympathize in these exalted feelings; had harshness, or even neglect, been extended over his childhood and his opening youth, happiness, such as had gilded his life, would never have been his.

As Emmeline had rejoiced, so also might have Herbert, as they neared the gates of his home, had there not been one recollection to dim his happiness. She who had shared in all his pleasures, who had shed a charm over that spot, a charm which he had never felt so keenly as when he looked for it, and found it not; the favorite playfellow of his infancy, the companion of his youth, his plighted bride, she was in far distant lands, and vainly on his first return home did Herbert struggle to remove the weight of loneliness resting on his heart; he never permitted it to be apparent, for to his family he was the same devoted son and affectionate brother he had ever been, but painfully he felt it. Mr. Myrvin and his son were now both inmates of Mr. Hamilton's family. The illegality of the proceedings against the former, in expelling him from his ministry of Llangwillan, had now been clearly proved,

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for the earnestness of Mr. Hamilton permitted no delay; and tears of pious gratitude chased down the cheeks of the injured man, as he recognized in the person of his benefactor the brother of the suffering woman whom he had sheltered, and whose bed of death he had deprived of its sting. The persuasions of Mr. Hamilton succeeded in conquering his objections to the plan, and he consented to make Oakwood his home for a short time, ere he once more settled in his long-loved rectory.

With Arthur, Ellen speedily resumed her place; the remembrance of that neglected little girl had never left Mr. Myrvin's mind, and when, radiant in animation and returning health and happiness, she hastily, almost impetuously advanced to meet him, he pressed her to his bosom with the affection of a father; and even as a daughter Ellen devoted herself to him during his residence at Oakwood. He had been the first in England to treat her with kindness; he had soothed her childish sorrow, and cheered her painful duties; he had been the first since her father's death to evince interest for her, and though so many years had passed, that the little girl was fast verging into womanhood, yet such things were not forgotten, and Ellen endeavored to prove the gratitude which time had not effaced.

Ellen was happy, her health almost entirely restored; but it was scarcely possible for any observant person to live with her for any time, without noticing the expression of pensive melancholy, of subdued spirit, unnatural in one still so very young, that, unless animated by any casual circumstances, ever rested on her features. Mr. Myrvin soon noticed this, and rather wondered such should still be, when surrounded by so much kindness and affection. Her gentleness and controlled temper, her respectful devotion to her aunt and uncle, were such as to awaken his warmest regard, and cause him to regret that shade of remaining sadness so foreign to her age. Traces of emotion were so visible on her cheeks one day, returning from a walk with Mr. Myrvin, that Mrs. Hamilton felt convinced the tale of the past had been told, and fearing her niece had done herself injustice, she scrupled no longer in alluding to it herself. Mr. Myrvin was deeply affected at the tale, and much relieved when the whole was known; for when he had praised her general conduct, and approved of so many feelings and sentiments she had acknowledged, and then tenderly demanded the cause of that depression he sometimes witnessed, Ellen

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had given vent to a violent burst of emotion, and spoken of a sin, a fearful sin, which long years of probation alone could wash away. Her strong, her terrible temptation, her extreme wretchedness and dreadful sufferings she had not mentioned, and, consequently, when known, an air of even more gentle and more affectionate interest pervaded Mr. Myrvin's manner towards her. Hearing her one day express an ardent desire once more to visit Llangwillan, to see again her mother's grave, he earnestly entreated Mrs. Hamilton's permission for her to visit him for a few weeks; her company would, he said, indeed shed a joy over his home, and afford much pleasure to a widowed sister who resided with him. Mrs. Hamilton smilingly consented, and a flush of animated pleasure dyed Ellen's cheeks at the proposal. For about a quarter of an hour she was all delight and animation, when suddenly a thought entered her mind, banishing her unusual mirth, and filling her eyes with tears. Her voice faltered audibly, as she warmly thanked Mr. Myrvin and her aunt for their wish to increase her happiness, but she would rather not leave home that year. The change was so sudden, her manner so contradictory to her words, that Mrs. Hamilton believing some fanciful reason existed, would have insisted on her compliance, and playfully accused her of unfounded caprice. There was, however, a degree of earnest entreaty in her manner, that Mr. Myrvin would not combat, and he expressed himself contented with her promise for the following year. Mrs. Hamilton was not, however, quite so easily satisfied. Ellen had been latterly so open with her, that any thing like concealment in her conduct gave her some little uneasiness; but she could not withstand the imploring look of her niece, as she entreated her not to think her capricious and wilful; she was sure Mrs. Hamilton would approve of her reason did she confess it.

"I am not quite so sure of that," was her aunt's smiling reply; "but, however, I will trust you, though I do not like mysteries," and the subject was dismissed.

The manners and conversation of Arthur Myrvin were such as to prepossess both Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton very much in his favor, and strengthened the opinion they had already formed concerning him, on the word of their son. The respectful deference with which he ever treated Caroline and Emmeline, often caused a laugh at his expense from Percy, but gratified Mrs. Hamilton; Percy declared he stood as much in awe of his sisters as if they were the highest ladies in the land. Arthur bore his raillery with unruffled temper, but he felt the dis

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tance that fortune placed between him and those fair girls, and he hoped, by reserve, to lessen the danger that might in their society attack his peace. Emmeline mistook this cautious reserve for coldness and distaste towards women, and, with the arts of a playful child, she frequently endeavored to draw him from his abstraction, and render him a more agreeable companion.

There was still so very much of the child in Emmeline, though now rapidly approaching her eighteenth birthday, she was still so very young in manners and appearance, that the penetration of Mrs. Hamilton must not be too severely criticised, if it failed in discovering that intimately mingled with this childlike manner—the warm enthusiasm of a kind nature—was a fund of deep reflection, and feelings quite equal to her age. Mrs. Hamilton fancied the realities of life were still to her a dream. Had any one spoken to her of the marriage of Emmeline as soon taking place, she would have started at the idea, as a thing for some years impossible; and that her affections might become engaged—that the childlike, innocent, joyous Emmeline, whose gayest pleasures still consisted in chasing with wild glee the butterflies as they sported on the summer flowers, or tying garlands of the fairest buds to adorn her own or her sister's hair, or plucking the apples from the trees and throwing them to the village children as they sauntered at the orchard gate—whose graver joys consisted in revelling in every poet that her mother permitted her to read, or making her harp resound with wild, sweet melody—whose laugh was still so unchecked and gay—that such a being could think of love, of that fervid and engrossing passion, which can turn the playful girl into a thinking woman, Mrs. Hamilton may be pardoned if she deemed it as yet a thing that could not be; and she, too, smiled at the playful mischief with which Emmeline would sometimes claim the attention of young Myrvin, engage him in conversation, and then, with good-humored wit and repartee, disagree in all he said, and compel him to defend his opinions with all the eloquence he possessed.

With Ellen, young Myrvin was more at his ease; he recalled the days that were past, and never felt with her the barrier which his sensitive delicacy had placed between himself and her cousins. Arthur was proud, more so than he was aware of himself. He would have considered himself more humbled to love and sue for one raised by fortune or rank above him, than in uniting with one, who in both these assen-

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tials was his inferior. He was ambitious, but for honors and station obtained by his own endeavors, not conferred by another. From his earliest youth he had grown up with so strong an impression that he was intended for the Church, that he considered it impossible any other profession could suit him better. When he mingled intimately at college with young men of higher rank and higher hopes, he discovered too late that a clergyman's life was not such as to render him most happy; but he could not draw back, he would not so disappoint his father. He felt and knew, to obtain the summit of his desires, to be placed in a public situation, where his ambition would have full scope, required a much larger fortune than his father possessed. He clothed himself in what he believed to be resignation and contentment, but which was in truth a morbid sensitiveness to his lot in life, which he imagined poverty would separate from every other. Association with Herbert Hamilton, to whom in frankness he confided these secret feelings, did much towards removing their bitterness; and the admiration which he felt for Herbert, whose unaffected piety and devotion to the Church he could not fail to appreciate, partially reconciled his ambitious spirit to his station. Yet the exalted ideas of Herbert were not entirely shared by Arthur, whose thoughts were centred in a more stirring field of usefulness than it would in all probability be his to fill. Herbert combated these objections with so much eloquence, he pointed with such ardent zeal to the crown eternal that would be his, when divine love had triumphed over all earthly ambition, and his duties were done for love of Him, who had ordained them, that when the time of his ordination came (which it did very shortly after the commencement of this chapter), he would not have drawn back, even had a more attractive profession been offered for his acceptance. The friendship and countenance of Mr. Hamilton did much to reconcile him to his lot. Mr. Howard's curate died suddenly, at the very time that Mr. Hamilton was writing to the Marquis of Malvern, in Arthur's favor, for a vacant living then at his disposal. Both now were offered to the young man's choice, and Percy, even Mr. Hamilton himself, were somewhat surprised that, without a moment's hesitation, he accepted that under Mr. Howard, in the gift of Mr. Hamilton, inferior as it was in point of worldly prospects to Lord Malvern's. His two parishes were situated about nine or ten miles from Oakwood, and seven or eight from St. Howard's rectory, and ere Mr. Myrvin returned to Llang-

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willan, he had the satisfaction of seeing his son settled comfortably in his curacy, performing his duties to the approval of his rector, and gaining by his manner the affection of his parishioners.

Herbert alone knew to its full extent the conquest his friend had achieved over himself. His inclination led him to ambitious paths, where he might in time obtain the notice of and mingle in the highest ranks; but when the innate nobleness of his mind showed him where his duty lay, when conscience loudly whispered now was the time to redeem the errors of his college life, to prove his reverence for his father, to preserve the kindness of those friends, exalted alike by rank and virtue, with whom he still might mingle, with a strong effort he banished all ambitious wishes, and devoted himself heart and soul to his ministerial duties.

Herbert would speak of his friend at home, of his self-conquering struggles, till all would sympathize in the interest he so warmly displayed, particularly Emmeline, with whom, sportive as she was, Herbert from his childhood had had more thoughts and feelings in common than he ever had with Caroline; and now, whether he spoke of Mary Greville or Arthur Myrvin, in her he ever found a willing and attentive auditor. Whenever he had ridden over to Hawthorndell, which he frequently did, Emmeline would always in their next walk playfully draw from him every particular of the "Lone Hermit," as in true poetic style she termed Arthur. But there was no seriousness in her converse either of or to young Myrvin. There was always mischief lurking in her laughter-loving eye; always some wild joke betrayed in the arch smiles ever lingering round her mouth; but mischief as it was, apparently the mere wantonness of childhood, or very early youth, something in that glance or smile ever bade young Myrvin's heart beat quicker than before, and every pulse throb with what at first he deemed was pain. It was relief to him to seek the quiet, gentle Ellen, and speak to her even as he would to a sister, of all that had occurred to him since last they met, so secure was he of sympathy in his future prospects, his present cares and joys. But still that strange feeling lingered within his bosom in his solitary hours, and he dwelt on it much more than on the gentle accents of that fair girl whom in his boyhood he had termed his wife; and stranger still, if it were pain, that it should urge him on to seek it, that he could not rest till the glance of that eye, the tone of that voice, had once more been

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seen and heard, till fresh excitement had been given to thoughts and emotions which were unconsciously becoming the mainsprings of his life.

The undisturbed and happy calmness of Oakwood removed in a great measure Caroline's painful feelings; all thoughts of Lord Alphingham were gradually banished. The question how she could ever have been so blind as to imagine that he had gained her affections, that she loved him, returned more frequently than she could answer.

But another vision stood forth to confront the darkened one of the Viscount, and the contrast heightened the lustre of the former. Why had she been so mad, so infatuated, as to reject with scorn and pride the hand and heart of one so noble, so fond, so superior as Eugene St. Eval? Now that the film had been removed from her eyes, that all the past appeared in its true colors, that self-will and love of independence had departed from her, the startling truth burst upon her mind, that she had loved, truly loved, the very man who of all others would have been the choice of both her parents—loved, and as his wife, might have been one of the happiest, the most envied of her sex, had not that indomitable spirit of coquetry urged her on, and lowered her to become a very tool in the hands of the artful and designing Annie Grahame.

Caroline loved; had she doubted the existence of that passion, every letter from Mary Greville would have confirmed it; for we will not say it was jealousy she felt, it was more self-condemnation and regret heightened at times almost into wretchedness. That St. Eval should so soon forget her, that he should love again ere six months had passed, could not fail to be a subject of bitter mortification to one in whose bosom pride still rested. She would not have thus tormented herself with turning and twisting Mary's information into such ideas, had she not felt assured that he had penetrated her weakness, and despised her. Fickleness was no part of St. Eval's character, of that she was convinced; but it was natural he should cease to love, when he had ceased to esteem, and in the society and charms of Louisa Manvers endeavor to forget his disappointment.

Through Emmeline's introductory letter, Lord St. Eval had become sufficiently intimate with Mrs. Greville and Mary as to succeed in his persuasions for them to leave their present residence, and occupy a vacant villa on Lago Guardia, within a brief walk of Lord Delmont's, feeling sure that an in

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timacy between Mrs. Manvers's family and that of Mrs. Greville would be mutually pleasurable and beneficial; his friendly wishes succeeded. Mrs. Greville found an able and sympathizing companion in the good-hearted, homely mother of the elegant and accomplished Lord Delmont, and Mary's sadness was at once soothed and cheered by the more animated Louisa whose lot in life had never known those murky clouds of sorrow and anxiety which had so often dimmed the youth of Mary. The brother of Louisa had been all in all to her. She felt as if life could not have another charm, as if not another joy was wanting to render her lot perfect, until that other charm appeared, and her ardent fancy quickly knew to its full extent the delights of female companionship and sympathy. Their very dissimilitude of disposition rendered dearer the ties of youthful friendship, and Emmeline sometimes felt a pang of jealousy, as she read in the letters of her friend the constant praises of Louisa Manvers, not that any diminution of early affection breathed in them. Mary ever wrote so as to satisfy the most exacting disposition; but it required all Mrs. Hamilton's eloquence to persuade Emmeline she should rather rejoice than grieve that Mary had found some one to supply her place. But vainly Emmeline tried in playfulness to infect her brother Herbert with a portion of her jealousy, for she knew not the contents of those letters Mary ever wrote to Herbert, or she would not for one moment have imagined that either Lord Delmont or St. Eval would usurp her brother's place.

"Few things would give me greater pleasure," one of Mary's letters said, "than to see the union of Lord St. Eval and my fair friend. It appears to me strange that each, with affections disengaged, can remain blind to the fascinations of the other. They are well suited in every respect, and I should fancy their union would certainly be a fair promise of happiness. I live in hope, though as yet, I must confess, hope has but very little to feed on."

St. Eval still lingered at Monterosa, and it was well for the inhabitants he did, for an event occurred which plunged that happy valley from joy and gayety into wailing and affliction, and even for a brief interval infected the inhabitants of Oakwood with its gloom. Death came, and tore away as his victim the widow's son, the orphan's brother. The title of Delmont became extinct, for the last scion of that ancient race had gone to his last home. He had gone with St. Eval and some other young men on a fishing expedition, at some distance; a

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sudden squall had arisen, and dispersing with much damage the little flotilla, compelled the crews of each to seek their own safety. The sails of St. Eval's boat were not furled quickly enough to escape the danger; it upset, and though, after much buffeting and struggling with the angry waters, St. Eval succeeded in bearing his insensible friend to land, his constitution had received too great a shock, and he lingered but a few brief weeks ere he was released from suffering. He had been thrown with violence against a rock, producing a concussion of the brain, which, combined with the length of time he was under water, produced fever, and finally death.

On the agony of the bereaved mother and sister it would be useless to linger. St. Eval forgot his individual sorrows, and devoted himself, heart and soul, in relieving those helpless sufferers, in which painful task he was ably seconded by Mary and her mother, whose letters to their friends at Oakwood, in that season of affliction, spoke of him in a manner that, unconsciously to themselves, confirmed every miserable suspicion in Caroline's mind, and even excited some such feeling in her parents, whose disappointment was thus vividly recalled. That he should ever seek their child again they deemed impossible, as did Caroline herself; but still it was in vain they endeavored to look with any degree of pleasure to his union with another.

Mr. Hamilton's family mourned Lord Delmont's early fate with sincere regret, though they had known but little of him: but about this time the thoughts of Mrs. Hamilton were turned in another direction, by a circumstance which caused unaffected sorrow in her daughter and niece; nor were she and her husband exempt. Lucy Harcourt had been so many years a member of the family, she had been so associated from their infancy in the affections of her pupils, that to part from her was the bitterest pang of sorrow that Emmeline had yet known, and it was long before Mrs. Hamilton herself could be reconciled to the idea of separation; she had ever regarded and treated Miss Harcourt as a sister, and intended that even when her family were settled, she should never want another home. It was not only her own virtues that had endeared her to Mrs. Hamilton; the services she had rendered her children, her active and judicious share in the arduous task of education, demanded and received from both Mr. and Mrs, Hamilton the meed of gratitude and esteem, and never once, in the seventeen years of Miss Harcourt's residence amongst them, had they regretted

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the impulse which had offered her a sheltering home and sympathizing friends.

Emmeline and Ellen were still her pupils, and Mrs. Hamilton intended them to remain so for two or three years longer, even after they were introduced, and it was on that account Miss Harcourt hesitated in complying with the earnest entreaty of him whose happy home in her early youth she had so nobly quitted, preferring to live by her own exertions than to share the home of the man she loved, when he was married to another.

It had been very, very long ere disappointed affection had permitted her to be cheerful. Her cousin, while rejoicing in the happy home she had found, while congratulating her with fraternal interest on the kind friends her mother's virtues had procured her, imagined not the agony she was striving to conquer, the devoted love for him which disturbed the peace around her, which otherwise she might have enjoyed to its full extent; but she did conquer at length. That complete separation from him did much towards restoring peace, although perhaps love might still have lingered; for what absence, what distance, can change a woman's heart? Yet it interfered no longer with happiness, and she answered Seymour's constant and affectionate letters in his own style, as a sister would have done.

Sixteen years had passed, and not once had the cousins met. Womanhood in its maturity was now Lucy's, every girlish feeling had fled, and she perhaps thought young affections had gone also, but her cheek flushed, and every pulse throbbed, when she opened a long, long expected letter, and found her cousin was a widower in declining health, which precluded him from attending to his two motherless girls, imploring her, as her duties in Mrs. Hamilton's family were nearly over, to leave England and be the guardian spirit of his home, to comfort his affliction, to soothe his bodily suffering, and learn to know and love his children, ere they were fatherless as well as motherless, and deprived of every friend save the aunt Lucy they had been taught to love, although to them unknown. The spirit of deep melancholy breathing through this epistle, called forth for a few minutes a burst of tears from her who for so many years had checked all selfish grief.

"If I can comfort him, teach his children to love me, and be their mother now they are orphans, oh, I shall not have

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lived in vain." Such were the words that escaped her lips as she ceased to weep, and sat a few minutes in thought, then sought Mrs. Hamilton and imparted all to her. Mrs. Hamilton hesitated not a moment in her decision. Her own regret at parting with her friend interfered not an instant with the measure she believed would so greatly tend to the happiness of Miss Harcourt. Mr. Hamilton seconded her; but the sorrow at separation, which was very visible in the midst of their exertions for her welfare, both gratified and affected Lucy. Never had she imagined how dear she was to her pupils till the time of separation came; and when she quitted England, it was with a heart swelling with interest and affection for those she had left, and the fervent prayer that they might meet again.

Mr. Seymour had said, were it not for his declining health, which forbade the exertion of travelling, he would have come for her himself; but if she would only consent to his proposal, if she could resign such kind friends to devote herself to an irritable and ailing man, he would send one under whose escort she might safely travel. Miss Harcourt declined that offer, for Mr. Hamilton and Percy had both declared their intention of accompanying her as far as Paris, and thence to Geneva, where Mr. Seymour resided.

It was long ere Mr. Hamilton's family became reconciled to this change; Oakwood appeared so strange without the kind, the gentle Miss Harcourt, whose steady yet mild firmness had so ably assisted Mrs. Hamilton in the rearing of her now blooming and virtuous family. It required some exertion, not only in Emmeline but in Ellen, to pursue their studies with any perseverance, now that the dear friend who had directed and encouraged them had departed. Ellen's grateful affection had the last few years been returned with equal warmth; that prejudice which had at first characterized Miss Harcourt's feelings towards her had entirely vanished during her sufferings, and a few days before her departure, Lucy with much feeling had admitted the uncalled-for harshness with which she too had treated her in her months of misery, and playfully, yet earnestly asked her forgiveness. They were alone, and Ellen's only answer had been to throw herself on her friend's neck and weep.

Before Christmas came, however, these painful feelings had been conquered. Pleasing letters from Miss Harcourt arrived by almost every post for one or other of the inmates of Oak-

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wood, and their contents breathing her own happiness, and the warmest, most affectionate interest in the dear ones she had left, satisfied even Emmeline, from whom a fortnight's visit from the Earl and Countess of Elmore had banished all remaining trace of sadness. Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton had welcomed but very few resident visitors to Oakwood during the early years of their children, but now it was with pleasure they exercised the hospitality so naturally their own, and received in their own domains the visits of their most intimate friends of London; but these visits afford us no matter of entertainment, nor enter much into the purpose of this history. A large party was never collected within the walls of Oakwood; the intimate friends of Mr. Hamilton were but few, for it was only those who thought on the essentials of life as himself with whom he mingled in the familiar position of host. The Marquis of Malvern's family alone remained to spend Christmas with them, and added much to the enjoyment of that domestic circle. Their feelings and pursuits were in common, for the Marchioness of Malvern was a mother after Mrs. Hamilton's own stamp, and her children had benefited by similar principles; the same confidence existed between them. The Marchioness had contrived to win both the reverence and affection of her large family, though circumstances had prevented her devoting as much of her own time and care on their education as had Mrs. Hamilton. Her eldest daughter was married; her second, some few years older than Caroline, was then staying with her, and only one of the three who accompanied her to Oakwood was as yet introduced. Lady Florence was to make her *debut* the following season, with Emmeline Hamilton; and Lady Emily was still, when at home, under the superintendence of a governess and masters. Lord Louis, the Marchioness's youngest child, a fine lad of sixteen, with his tutor, by Mr. Hamilton's earnest desire, also joined their happy party, and by his light-hearted humor and fun, added not a little to the amusements of the evening. But it was Lady Gertrude, the eldest of the three sisters then at Oakwood, that Mrs. Hamilton earnestly hoped might take the place Annie Grahame had once occupied in Caroline's affections. Hers was a character much resembling her brother's, St. Eval, to whom her features also bore a striking resemblance. She might, at a first introduction, have been pronounced proud, but, as is often the case, reserve was mistaken for pride. Yet in her domestic circle she was ever the gayest, and the first to con-

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tribute to general amusement. In childhood she had stood in a degree alone, for her elder sisters were four or five years older than herself, and Florence and Emily four and five years younger. She had learned from the first to seek no sympathy, and her strong feelings might perhaps, by being constantly smothered, at length have perished within her, and left her the cold unloving character she appeared to the world, had it not been for the devoted affection of her brother Eugene, in whom she soon learned to confide every emotion as it rose, at that age when girls first become sensible that they are thinking and feeling beings. They quickly became sensible that in almost every point they were kindred souls, and the names of Eugene and Gertrude were ever heard together in their family. Their affection was at length a proverb among their brothers and sisters, and perhaps it was this great similarity of disposition and the regard felt for her noble brother, that first endeared Gertrude to Mrs. Hamilton, whose wishes with regard to her and Caroline promised fulfilment. Some chord of sympathy had been struck within them, and they were very soon attached companions, although at first Lady Gertrude had hesitated, for she could not forget the tale of scornfully-rejected love imparted to her by her brother. She had marked the conduct of Caroline from the beginning. She too had hoped that in her she might have welcomed a sister, although her observant eye had marked some defects in her character which the ardent St. Eval had not perceived. Coolness during the past season had subsisted between them, for Caroline had taken no trouble to conquer Lady Gertrude's reserve, and the latter was too proud to make advances. In vain Lord St. Eval had wished a better understanding should exist between them; while Caroline was under the influence of Miss Grahame, it was impossible for her to associate in sympathy with Lady Gertrude Lyle; yet now that they mingled in the intimacy of home, now the true character of Caroline was apparent, that Lady Gertrude had time and opportunity to remark her devotion to her parents, more particularly to her mother, her affectionate kindness to her brothers and Emmeline and Ellen, her very many sterling virtues, which had previously been concealed, but which were discovered by the tributes of grateful affection constantly offered to her by the inhabitants of the village, by the testimony of Mr. Howard, the self-conquests of temper and inclination for the sake of others, which the penetrating eye of Lady Gertrude discovered, and, above all, the spirit of piety

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and meekness which now characterized her actions, all bade the sister of St. Eval reproach herself for condemning without sufficient evidence. For her conduct to her brother there was indeed no excuse, and on that subject alone, with regard to Caroline, Lady Gertrude felt bewildered, and utterly unable to comprehend her. It was a subject on which neither chose to speak, for it was a point of delicacy to both. Had Lady Gertrude been excluded from her brother's confidence, she too might have spoken as carelessly and admiringly of him as his sisters constantly did; but she could not so address the girl who had rejected him; it would be pleading his cause, from which she revolted with a repugnance natural to her high-minded character.

"If he still love her, as his letters would betray, let him come and plead his own cause; never will I say any thing that can make Caroline believe I am in secret negotiating for him."

Such was the thought that ever checked her, when about to speak of him in the common course of conversation, and baffled all Caroline's secret wishes that she would speak in his praise as her sisters and Lord Louis so constantly did.

But even as delicacy prevented all allusion to him from the lips of Lady Gertrude, so it actuated Caroline with perhaps even greater force. Would she betray herself, and confess that she repented her rejection of St. Eval? would she by word or deed betray that, would he return to her, she would be his own, and feel blessed in his affections? She shrunk almost in horror from doing so, and roused her every energy to conceal and subdue every emotion, till she could hear his name with composure. Yet more than once had Lady Gertrude, as she silently watched her countenance, fancied she perceived sufficient evidence to bid her wonder what could have induced Caroline's past conduct, to imagine that, if St. Eval could forget that, he might be happy yet; and for his sake, conquering her scruples, once she spoke openly of him, when she and Caroline were visiting some poor cottagers alone. She spoke of his character, many points of which, though she admired, she regretted, as rendering him less susceptible of happiness than many who were less gifted. "Unless he find a wife to love him as he loves—one who will devote herself to him alone, regardless of rank or fortune, Eugene never can be happy; and if he pass through life, unblest by the dearest and nearest ties, he will be miserable." So much she did say, and added her earnest wishes for his welfare, in a tone that caused the tears to spring

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to the eyes of her companion, who permitted her to speak for some time without in any way replying.

"What a pity you are his sister," she replied, rallying all her energies to speak frankly and somewhat sportively; "a woman like yourself is alone worthy of Lord St. Eval."

"You are wrong," replied Lady Gertrude, sadly; "I am much too cold and reserved to form, as a wife, the happiness of such a character as my brother's. We have grown together from childhood, we have associated more intimately and affectionately with each other than with any other members of our family, and therefore Eugene knows and loves me. The wife of St. Eval should be of a disposition as ingenuous and open as his is reserved; her affection, her sympathy, must make his felicity. He is grave—too grave; she should be playful, but not childish. Even if she have some faults, with the love for which my brother pines, the ingenuousness unsullied by the most trifling artifice, her very faults would bind her more closely to him."

Caroline was silent, and Lady Gertrude soon after changed the subject. Had she heard no reports of Caroline's preference of Lord Alphingham, of the affair which had somewhat hurried Mr. Hamilton's departure from London, that conversation would have confirmed her suspicions, that her brother was no subject of indifference to Caroline. She longed for her to be candid with her, to hear the whole truth from her own lips. The happiness of the young Earl was so dear to her, that she would have done much, very much to secure it; yet so far she could not force herself to go, particularly as he had given her no charge to do so. She little knew that Caroline would have given worlds, had they been at her disposal, to have confided all to her: her repentance, her folly, her earnest prayers for amendment, to become at length worthy of St. Eval. Caroline loved, truly loved, because she esteemed, Lady Gertrude; her friendship for her differed as much from that she believed she had felt for Annie Grahame, as her regard for St. Eval was unlike that which Lord Alphingham had originated. Once, the superiority of Lady Gertrude's character would have rendered her an object of almost dislike to Caroline, as possessing virtues she admired but would not imitate. Now those virtues were appreciated, her own inferiority was felt more painfully; and while associating with her, the recollections of the past returned more than ever, embittered by remorse. Sir George Wilmot and Lilla Graham were also guests at Oak-

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wood. The former declared he had seldom anchored in moorings so congenial to his taste. In Lilla the effects of happiness and judicious treatment were already distinctly visible. The young men spent the Christmas recess at home, and added much to the hilarity of their domestic circle; nor must we forget Arthur Myrvin, who spent as much of his time at Oakwood, as his duties permitted; the friendship of Herbert Hamilton doing much to remove the bitter feelings which often still possessed him. He would at first have shunned the invitation, but vainly he strove to do so; for there was one fair object there who held him with an iron chain, which excited while it bound him. He could not break it asunder, though peace he felt was flying from his grasp.

CHAPTER X.

"GERTRUDE'S letters this morning have brought her some extraordinarily agreeable tidings," exclaimed Lady Florence Lyle, gayly, as her sister entered the breakfast-room, rather later than usual.

"On my honor, her countenance is rather a clearer index than usual to-day," observed the Marquis, laughing. "Well, Gertrude, what is it?"

"News from Eugene," exclaimed Lady Emily and Lord Louis in a breath; "he is going to be married. Either Miss Manvers or Miss Greville have consented to take him for better or worse," added Lord Louis, laughing. "Gertrude, allow me to congratulate you on the gift of a new sister, who, as the wife of my right honorable brother the Earl of St. Eval, will be dearer to you than any other bearing the same relationship."

"Reserve your congratulations, Louis, till they are needed," replied Lady Gertrude, fixing her eyes steadily on Caroline's face, which was rapidly changing from pale to crimson.

"I have no such exciting news to communicate," she added, very quietly. "Eugene is in England, and alone."

"In England!" repeated Percy, starting up; "I am delighted to hear it. I just know enough of him to wish most ardently to know more. Will he not join us? He surely will not winter at Castle Malvern alone, like a hermit, surrounded by snows; if he do, he is a bachelor confirmed: not a hope for his restoration to the congenial warmth of life."

"He has no such intention" replied Lady Gertrude, smil-

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ing; "our present happy circle has too many attractions to permit his resting quietly in solitude, and, with Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton's kind permission, will join us here by Christmas Eve."

"There are few whom we shall be so pleased to welcome as my noble young friend St. Eval," answered Mr. Hamilton, instantly; "few whose society I so much prize, both for myself and my sons."

"And the minstrel's harp shall sleep no more, but wake her boldest chords to welcome such a guest to Oakwood's aged walls," exclaimed Emmeline, gayly.

"Thus I give you leave to welcome him, but if he take my place with you in our evening walks, I shall wish him back again at Monterosa in a twinkling," observed Lord Louis, in the same gay tone, and looking archly at his fair companion; "when Eugene appears my reign is always over."

"Louis, I shall put you under the command of Sir George Wilmot," said his father, laughing, however, with the rest of the circle.

"Ay, ay, do; the sea is just the berth for such youngsters as these," remarked the old Admiral, clapping his hand kindly on the lad's shoulder.

While such *badinage* was passing, serious thoughts were occupying the minds of more than one individual of that circle. It would be difficult to define the feelings of Caroline as she heard that St. Eval was in England, and coming to Oakwood. Had he so soon conquered his affections, that he could associate with her on terms of friendly intimacy? She longed to confess to her mother her many conflicting feelings; she felt that her earnest prayers were her own, but shame prevented all disclosure. She could not admit that she now loved that very man whom she had once treated with such contempt and scorn, rejected with proud indifference. Even her mother, her fond mother, would say her present feelings were a just punishment for the past; and that she could not bear. Inwardly she resolved that not a word should pass her lips; she would suffer unshrinkingly, and in silence.

Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, and the Marquis and Marchioness of Malvern also became engrossed with the same subject; the latter had seen and highly approved of their son's attentions to Caroline, and appeared gratified by the manner in which she accepted them. Disappointment and indignation for a time succeeded the young Earl's departure for the Continent, but

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the friendship so long subsisting between the families prevented all unpleasant feeling, except, perhaps, a little towards Caroline herself. They gladly welcomed the intelligence that St. Eval was in England, and wished to join them at Oakwood, for they hailed it as a sign that his fancy had been but fleeting, and was now entirely conquered. Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton thought the same, though to them it was far more a matter of disappointment than rejoicing; but hope mingled almost unconsciously with regret, and they too were pleased that he was about to become their guest.

Lady Gertrude's eyes were more than once during that morning fixed on Caroline, as the subject of St. Eval's travels and residence abroad were discussed, but she was silent; whatever were her secret reflections, they were confined within the recesses of her own heart.

Lord St. Eval came, and with him fresh enjoyment for Percy and Herbert; and even for young Myrvin, who found nothing in the society of the young nobleman to wound his pride by recalling to his mind his own inferior rank. Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton fancied they had read his character before; but their previous intimacy had not discovered those many pleasing qualifications which domestic amusements and occupations betrayed. Much of his reserve was now banished; his manners were as easy and as free from pride or hauteur as his conversation, though chaste and intellectual, was from pedantry. To all the individuals of that happy circle he was the same; as kind and as gay to Emmeline and Ellen as to his own sisters; there might, perhaps, have been a degree of reserve in his demeanor towards Caroline, but that, except to those principally concerned, might not have been remarked, for his intercourse with her was even more general than with others. Emmeline and Ellen, or even Lilla, was often his selected companion for a walk, but such an invitation never extended to Caroline, and yet he could never be said either to neglect or shun her; and she shrinking from attracting his notice as much as she had once before courted it, an impassable yet invisible barrier seemed to exist between them. In St. Eval's manner, his mother and Lady Gertrude read that his feelings were not conquered; that he was struggling to subdue them, and putting their subjection to the proof; but Caroline and her parents imagined, and with bitter pain, that much as he had once esteemed and loved her, a feeling of indifference now possessed him.

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Herbert found pleasure in the society of the young Earl for St. Eval had penetrated the secret of his and Mary's love, though with innate delicacy he refrained from noticing it farther than constantly to make Mary his theme during his walks with Herbert, and speaking of her continually to the family, warming the heart of Emmeline yet more in his favor, by his sincere admiration of her friend. He gave an excellent account of her health, which she had desired him to assure her friends the air of Italy had quite restored. He spoke in warm admiration of her enthusiasm, her love of nature, of all which called forth the more exalted feelings; of her unaffected goodness, which had rendered her a favorite, spite of her being a foreigner and a Protestant, throughout the whole hamlet of Monterosa; and as he thus spoke, the anxious eye of Mrs. Hamilton ever rested on her Herbert, who could read in that glance how true and fond was the sympathy, which not once since he had confided in her his happiness, had he regretted that he had sought.

The remaining period of the Marquis of Malvern's sojourn at Oakwood passed rapidly away without any event of sufficient importance to find a place in these pages. They left Oakwood at the latter end of January for St. Eval's beautiful estate in Cornwall, where they intended to remain a month ere they went to London, about the same time as Mr. Hamilton's family. That month was a quiet one at Oakwood; all their guests had departed, and, except occasional visits from Arthur Myrvin and St. Eval, their solitude was uninterrupted.

St. Eval's estate was situated a few miles inland from the banks of the Tamar, one of the most beautiful spots bordering that most beautiful river. He was wont leisurely to sail down the stream to Plymouth, and thence to Oakwood, declaring the distance was a mere trifle; but, nevertheless it was sufficiently long for Mr. Hamilton sometimes to marvel at the taste of his noble friend, which led him often twice and regularly once a week to spend a few hours, never more, at Oakwood, when he knew they should so soon meet in London. St. Eval did not solve the mystery, but continued his visits, bringing cheerfulness and pleasure whenever he appeared, and bidding hope glow unconsciously in each parent's heart, though had they looked for its foundation, they would have found nothing in the young Earl's manner to justify its encouragement.

In March Mr. Hamilton's family once more sought their residence in Berkeley Square, about a week after the Marquis

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of Malvern's arrival; and this season, the feelings of the sisters, relative to the gayeties in which they were now both to mingle, were more equal. The bright hues with which Caroline had before regarded them had faded,—too soon and too painfully, indeed.

She had been deceived, and in that word, when applied to a young, aspiring, trusting mind, what anguish does it not comprise. True, she deserved her chastisement, not only that she had acted the part of a deceiver to one who trusted her far more than she had done Lord Alphingham, but wilfully she had blinded herself to her own feelings, that she might prove her independence; yet these facts lessened not the bitterness of feeling which was now often hers. But she did not relinquish society; the dread of encountering Lord Alphingham was not strong enough to overcome her secret wish that, by her conduct in society, she might prove to St. Eval that, although unworthy to be selected as his wife, she would yet endeavor to regain his esteem. She had resolved to think less of herself and more of others, and thus become more amiable in their sight, and not feel so many mortifications, as by her constant desire for universal homage, she had previously endured. She knew the task was difficult so to conquer herself, and doubting her own strength, was led to seek it where alone it could be found. To none did she confess these secret feelings and determination; calmly and steadily she looked forward, and so successfully had she schooled herself to submission, that no word or sign as yet betrayed to her parents the real state of her affections.

Emmeline's dislike to London had abated as much as had her sister's glowing anticipations. They were now only to be four months in the metropolis; the strict routine of masters, etc., was at an end, and she was to accompany Mrs. Hamilton whenever she went out. She left Oakwood with regret, and the society and conversation of Arthur Myrvin were missed more often in London than she chose to confess, but enjoyment was ever found for Emmeline—life was still a romance to her. In the society of London, as in the cottages of Oakwood, she was beloved, and she was happy; but those of the opposite sex, much as they thronged around her, had no more thought of demanding such a being in marriage, than she had of what is termed making conquests. It was therefore with feelings of much less anxiety Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton mingled in society this season, for the conduct of both their daughters was such as to afford them satisfaction.

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Some changes had taken place in many of the personages with whom we are acquainted, since the last time we beheld them. Short and evanescent is fashionable popularity. Lord Alphingham's reign might be, in a degree, considered over. Some rumors had been floating over the town at that time of the year when, in all probability, he thought himself most secure, that is, when London society is dispersed; rumors which had the effect of excluding him from most of those circles in which Mr. Hamilton's family mingled, and withdrawing from him in a great measure the friendship of Montrose Grahame; who, the soul of honor himself, shrunk from any connection with one whose reputation the faintest breath had stained. Yet still there were many who regarded these rumors as the mere whisperings of envy, and with them he was as much a favorite as ever. Amongst these was Annie Grahame, whose marked preference more than atoned to the Viscount for her father's coldness. In vain Grahame commanded that his daughter should change her manner towards him. She, who had prevailed on a daughter to disobey this very mandate from the lips of an indulgent parent, was not likely to regard that of the father whose sternness and often uncalled-for severity had completely alienated her affections, and Lord Alphingham had now another urgent reason to flatter Annie's vanity and make her his own.

A distant relation and godmother of Lady Helen Grahame had, most unexpectedly, left her at her death sole heiress to a handsome fortune, which was to descend undivided to her elder daughter, and thus to Annie's other attractions was now added that all-omnipotent charm, the knowledge that she was an heiress, not perhaps to any very large property, but quite sufficient to most agreeably enlarge the fortune of any gentleman who would venture to take her for better or worse. One would have supposed that now every wish of this aspiring young lady was gratified; but no. It mattered not, though crowds were at her feet, that when they met, which was very seldom, even Caroline was no longer her rival, all the affection she possessed was lavished without scruple on Lord Alphingham, and every thought was turned, every effort directed towards the accomplishment of that one design. So deeply engrossed was she in this resolution, that she had no time nor thought to annoy Caroline, as she had intended, except in exercising to its full extent her power over Lord Alphingham whenever she was present, in which the Viscount's own irri-

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tated feelings towards her ably assisted. Caroline felt the truth of her mother's words, that Lord Alphingham, indeed, had never honorably loved her; that Annie's conduct justified Mrs. Hamilton's prejudice, and as her heart shrunk in sadness from the retrospection of these truths, it swelled in yet warmer affection, not only towards her fond and watchful mother, but towards the friends that mother's judicious choice selected and approved.

Cecil Grahame had been continually in the habit of drawing upon his mother's cash for the indulgence of his extravagant pleasures, and Lady Helen had thoughtlessly satisfied all his wishes, without being in the least aware of the evil propensities she was thus encouraging. It was not till Cecil was about to leave Eton for the University, that she was at all startled at the amount of his debts, and then her principal alarm arose more from the dread of her husband's anger towards her son, if he discovered the fact, than from any maternal anxiety for Cecil's unsteady principles. Her only wish was to pay off these numerous debts, without disclosing them to the husband she so weakly dreaded. How could she obtain so large a sum, even from her own banker, and thus apply it, without his knowledge and assistance? The very anticipation of so much trouble terrified her almost into a fit of illness; and rather than exert her energies or expose her son to his father's wrath, she would descend to deceit, and implore his assistance in obtaining the whole amount, on pretence that she required it for the payment of her own expenses and debts of honor She imagined that she had sunk too low in her husband's esteem to sink much lower; and therefore, if her requiring money to discharge debts of honor exposed her yet more to his contempt, it was not of much consequence; besides, if it were, she could not help it, a phrase with which Lady Helen ever contrived to silence the rebukes of conscience when they troubled her, which, however, was not often.

She acted accordingly; but as she met the glance of her husband, a glance in which sadness triumphed over severity, she was tempted to throw herself at his feet, and beseech him not to imagine her the dissipated woman her words betrayed, for Lady Helen loved her husband as much as such a nature could love; but, of all things, she hated a scene, and though every limb trembled with emotion, she permitted him to leave her stung almost to madness by the disclosure her request implied Did she play? was that fatal propensity added to her numer-

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ous other errors? and yet never had any thing fallen under his eye to prove that she did. And what debts had she contracted to demand such a sum? Grahame felt she had deceived him; that the money had never been expended on herself; but he would not torture himself by demanding a true and full disclosure. The conduct of his children had ever grieved him, and fearing too justly the request of his wife related to them, madly and despairingly he closed his eyes and his lips, thus probably encouraging an evil which he might have prevented. He delivered the stated sum, and that same day made over to his wife's own unchecked disposal the whole of that fortune which, when first inherited, she had voluntarily placed in his hands as trustee for herself and for her daughter, to whom it would descend. Briefly he resigned the office she had entreated him to take, sternly observing that Annie had better moderate her expectations, as, did Lady Helen frequently incur such heavy debts, not much was likely to descend to her daughter. It was a great deal too much trouble for Lady Helen to expostulate, and if any feeling predominated to conquer the pang occasioned by Grahame's determination, it was relief, that she might now assist Cecil, if he should require it, without applying to his father.

Montrose Grahame was naturally not only an excellent but a judicious man; but to a great extent, his judgment had deserted him, when he selected Lady Helen as his wife. Had he been united to a woman in whose judgment and firmness he could confide, he would have been quite as much respected and beloved in his family as were Mr. Hamilton and the Marquis of Malvern in theirs; but now neither respect nor affection was extended towards him, except, perhaps, by Lilla, and unconsciously by Lady Helen. Severity, constantly indulged, was degenerating into moroseness; and feelings continually controlled, giving place to coldness and distrust. It was fortunate for Lilla's happiness and, as it afterwards proved, for her father's, that she was now under the kindly care of Mrs. Douglas, for constantly irritated with his elder girl, who, it must be owned, gave him abundant cause, that irritation and suspicion would undoubtedly have extended towards his younger, and at once have destroyed the gentleness and amiability which Mrs. Douglas was so carefully and tenderly fostering. Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton saw this change, and regretted it; but their influence, powerful as it was, could be of no avail in counteracting the effect of domestic annoyances, pa-

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ternal anxiety, and constantly-aroused irritation. Of all the evils in life, domestic discord is one of the greatest, one under which the heart bleeds the most; want of sympathy always prevents or banishes affection. Had Grahame been a careless, selfish man, he might possibly have been happier; his very sensitiveness was his bane. The silly weaknesses of his wife might partially have lessened his love for her, but his children, with all their faults, were dear to their father; they knew not, guessed not, how much his happiness was centred in theirs; how his heart was rent with anguish every time that duty, as he imagined, called on him to be severe. Had he followed the dictates of his nature, he would rather have ruined his children by over-indulgence than severity; but the hope of counteracting the effect of their mother's weakness had guided his mistaken treatment. Could his inmost soul have been read by those who condemned his harshness, they would have sincerely pitied the keen and agonized sensitiveness with which he felt the alienation of their affections. Much as he saw to blame in Annie, had she ever given him one proof of filial love, all would have been forgiven, and the blessing of a parent been her own in all she did or wished. Had Cecil confessed those errors of which he was conscious that he was guilty to his father, he would have found a true and tender friend, who would have led his naturally good, though too yielding, character aright, and misery to both might have been spared, but such was not to be; and in the fates of Alfred Greville and Cecil Grahame we may chance to perceive that, whatever may be the difficulties surrounding her, however blighted may appear the produce of her anxious labors, yet reward will attend the firm, religious mother, however difficult may be the actual fulfilment of her duties; while that mother who, surrounded by luxury and prosperity, believes, by unqualified indulgence, she is firmly binding her offspring in the observance of love and duty, will reap but too bitter fruit.

It was when in the presence of the Duchess of Rothbury Caroline felt most uncomfortable. The family were as cordial as ever, but there was somewhat in the cold, penetrating eye of her Grace, that bade her almost unconsciously shrink from meeting its glance. In the previous season the Duchess had ever singled Caroline out as an object of her especial regard, a circumstance so unusual in one of her character, that it rendered her present haughty coldness more difficult to bear. Caroline would have borne it in silence had it only extended

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towards herself, but it appeared as if both Emmeline and Ellen shared the contempt she perhaps had justly called forth on herself, as the Duchess, tenacious of her penetrating powers, feared to honor either of them with her favor, lest she should be again deceived. Caroline longed to undeceive her on this point, to give her a just estimate of both her sister and cousin's character, acknowledge how far superior in filial respect and affection, as well as in innate integrity and uprightness, they were to herself; but her mother entreated her to let time do its work, and wait till the Duchess herself discovered they were not what she either believed they were or might be, and she checked her wish.

We will here mention a circumstance which occurred in Mr. Hamilton's family soon after their arrival in town, which occasioned Mrs. Hamilton some uneasiness. Ellen's health was now perfectly re-established, and on Miss Harcourt's unexpected departure, Mrs. Hamilton had determined on introducing her niece with Emmeline in the present season. If Lucy had remained in her family, Ellen would not have made her *début* till the following year; not that her age was any obstacle, for there were only eight months difference between her and Emmeline, but her retiring disposition and delicacy of constitution caused Mrs. Hamilton to think this plan the most advisable. When, however, there was no longer any excuse with regard to failing health, and no Miss Harcourt with whom her evenings at home might be more agreeably spent, Mrs. Hamilton, by the advice of her husband, changed her intention; and Emmeline even made a joke with Ellen on the admirable fun they should have together, rejoicing that such an important event in the lives of each should take place on the same day. It so happened that Ellen never appeared to enter into her cousin's everlasting merriment on this subject; still she said nothing for or against till the day all-important with the ordering their elegant dresses for the occasion. Timidly and hesitatingly she then ventured to entreat her aunt still to adhere to her first plan, and allow her to remain quietly at home, under the care of Ellis, till the following year. Mrs. Hamilton and her cousins looked at her with astonishment; but the former smilingly replied, she could not indulge her niece in what appeared an unfounded fancy. The dress she should order, for she hoped Ellen would change her mind before the day arrived, as, unless a very good reason were given, she could not grant her request. Ellen appeared distressed; but the

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conversation changed, and the subject was not resumed till the day actually arrived, in the evening of which she was to accompany her aunt to a ball at the Marchioness of Malvern's, and two days after they were all engaged at a dinner-party at the Earl of Elmore's.

Summoning all her courage, Ellen entered her aunt's boudoir in the morning, and again made her request with an earnestness that almost startled Mrs. Hamilton, particularly as it was accompanied by a depression of manner, which she now did not very often permit to obtain ascendency. With affectionate persuasiveness she demanded the reason of this extraordinary resolution, and surprise gave way to some displeasure, when she found Ellen had really none to give. Her only entreaty was that she might not be desired to go out till the next year.

"But why, my dear Ellen? You must have some reason for this intended seclusion. Last year I fancied you wished much to accompany us, and I ever regretted your delicate health prevented it. What has made you change your mind so completely? Have you any distaste for the society in which I mingle?"

Falteringly, and almost inaudibly, Ellen answered, "None."

"Is it a religious motive? Do your principles revolt from the amusements which are now before you? Tell me candidly, Ellen. You know nothing displeases me so much as mystery; I can forgive every thing else, for then I know our relative positions, and am satisfied you are not going far wrong; but when every reason is studiously concealed, I cannot guess the truth, and I must fancy it is, at least, a mistaken notion blinding your better judgment. I did not expect a second mystery from you, Ellen."

Mrs. Hamilton's expressive voice clearly denoted she was displeased, and her niece, after two or three ineffectual efforts to prevent it, finally burst into tears.

"I do not wish to be harsh with you, or accuse you unjustly," continued her aunt, softened at the unaffected grief she beheld, "but if your reason be a good one, why do you so carefully conceal it? You have been lately so very open with me, and appeared to regard me so truly as your friend, that your present conduct is to me not only a riddle, but a painful reflection. Is it because your conscience forbids? Perhaps in your solitary moments you have fancied that worldly amusements, even in the moderate way in which we regard

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them, unfit us for more serious considerations, and you fear perhaps to confess that such is your reason, because it will seem a reproach to me. If such really be your motive, do not fear to confess it, my dear girl; I should be the very last to urge you to do any thing that is against your idea of what is right. To prove the fallacy of such reasoning, to show you that you may be truly religious without eccentricity, I certainly should endeavor to do, but I would not force you to go out with me till my arguments had convinced you. I fancy, by your blushing cheek, that I have really guessed the cause of your extraordinary resolution, and sorry as I shall be if I have, yet any reason, however mistaken, is better than a continued mystery."

"Indeed, indeed, I am not so good as you believe me," replied Ellen, with much emotion. "It is not the religious motive you imagine that urges me to act contrary to your wishes. Did you know my reason, I am sure you would not blame me; but do not, pray do not command me to tell you. I must obey, if you do, and then—"

"And then, if I appove of your reason, as you say I shall, what is it that you fear? Why, if your conscience does not reproach you, do you still hide it from me?"

Ellen was painfully silent. Mrs. Hamilton continued, in a tone of marked displeasure, "I fear I am to find myself again deceived in you, Ellen, though in what manner, as yet, I know not. I will not do such extreme violence to your inclinations as to command you to yield to my wishes. If you desire so much to remain at home, do so; but I cannot engage to make any excuse for you. Neither failing health nor being too young can I now bring forward; I must answer all inquiries for you with the truth, that your own wishes, which I could not by persuasion overcome, alone keep you at home. My conscience will still be clear from the reproaches so plentifully showered on me by the world last season, that I feared to bring forward my orphan niece with my daughters, lest her charms should rival theirs."

"Did the ill-natured and ignorant dare to say such a thing to you?" demanded Ellen, startled at this remark.

"They knew not the cause of your never appearing in public, and therefore, as appearances were against me, scrupled not to condemn."

"And do you heed them? Do these remarks affect you?" exclaimed Ellen, earnestly.

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"No, Ellen. I have done my duty; I will still do it, undisturbed by such idle calumnies, even should they now be believed by those whose opinions I value, who, from your seclusion, may imagine they have good reason. In my conduct towards you the last two years I have nothing to reproach myself."

"The last two years. Oh, never, never, from the first moment I was under your care, never can your conduct to me have given you cause for self-reproach, dearest aunt. Oh, do not say that the gratification of my wishes will give rise to a suspicion so unjust, so unfounded," entreated Ellen, seizing with impetuosity the hand of her aunt.

"In all probability it will; but do not speak in this strain now, Ellen; it accords not well with the mystery of your words," and Mrs. Hamilton coldly withdrew her hand. There was a moment's silence, for Ellen had turned away, pained to her heart's core, and soon after she quitted the room to seek her own, where, throwing herself on a low seat by the side of her couch, she gave way to an unrestrained and violent flow of tears. Mrs. Hamilton little knew the internal struggle her niece was enduring, the cause of her seclusion; that the term of her self-condemned probation was not fulfilled, that the long, tedious task was not accomplished; that it was for this purpose she so earnestly desired that her time might not be occupied by amusement, till her task was done, the errors of her earlier years atoned. Mrs. Hamilton had seldom felt more thoroughly displeased and hurt with her niece, than at the present moment. Gentle, and invulnerable as she ever seemed to irritation, open as the day herself, she had ever endeavored to frame her children's characters in the like manner; ingenuousness always obtained forgiveness, whatever might have been the mistake or fault. Ellen had always been a subject of anxiety and watchfulness; but the last two years her reserve had so entirely given place to candor, that solicitude had much decreased, till recalled by the resolution we have recorded. Had Ellen alleged any reason whatever, all would have been well; Mrs. Hamilton would not have thought on the subject so seriously. A mystery in her conduct had once before been so productive of anguish, that Mrs. Hamilton could not think with her usual calmness and temper on the circumstance.

It was so long before Ellen regained her composure, that traces of tears were visible even when she joined the family at

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dinner, and were remarked by her uncle, who jestingly demanded what could occasion signs of grief at such an important era in her life. Vainly Ellen hoped her aunt would spare her the pain of answering by even expressing her displeasure at her resolution, but she waited in vain, and she was compelled to own that the era of her life, to which her uncle so playfully referred, was postponed by her own earnest desire till the next season.

Mr. Hamilton put down his knife and fork in unfeigned astonishment. "Why, what is the meaning of this sudden change?" he exclaimed. "You were not wont to be capricious, Ellen. Will your aunt explain this marvellous mystery?"

"I am sorry I cannot," Mrs. Hamilton replied, in a tone that plainly betrayed to the quick ears of her husband that she was more than usually disturbed. "I am not in Ellen's confidence; her resolution is as extraordinary to me as to you, for she has given me no reason." Mr. Hamilton said no more, but he looked vexed, and Ellen did not feel more comfortable. He detained her as she was about to leave the room, and briefly demanded in what manner she intended to employ the many hours which, now that Miss Harcourt was away, she would have to herself. A crimson flush mounted to Ellen's temples as he spoke, a flush that, combined with the hesitating tone in which she answered, "to read and work," might well justify the sternness of tone and manner with which her uncle replied:

"Ellen, had you never deceived us, I might trust you, spite of that flushed cheek and hesitating tone; as it is, your conduct the last two years urges me to do so, notwithstanding appearances, and all I say is, beware how you deceive me a second time."

Ellen's cheek lost its color, and became for the space of a minute pale as death, so much so, that Mrs. Hamilton regretted her husband should have spoken so severely. Rallying her energies, Ellen replied, in a steady but very low voice—

"My conduct, uncle, during my aunt's and your absence from home, has been and shall ever be open to the inspection of all your household. I am too well aware that I am undeserving of your confidence, but I appeal to Ellis, on whose fidelity I know you rely, to prove to you in this case you suspect me unjustly." The last word was audible, but that was all, and, deeply pained, Ellen retired to her own room, which

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she did not quit, even to see her favorite cousin decked for the ball. Emmeline sought her, however, and tried by kisses to recall the truant rose, the banished smile, but Mrs. Hamilton did not come to wish her good night, and Ellen's heart was heavy.

Some few days passed, and Mrs. Hamilton accepted three several invitations without again expressing her wishes; but though the subject was not resumed, equal perplexity existed in the minds of both aunt and niece. Ellen did not accuse Mrs. Hamilton of unkindness, but she could not fail to perceive that she no longer retained her confidence, and that knowledge painfully distressed the orphan's easily excited feelings. Another circumstance gave her additional pain; her strange and apparently capricious behavior had been casually mentioned to Herbert, and he, aware that his advice was always acceptable to Ellen, ventured to remonstrate with her, and playfully to reason her out of what he termed her extraordinary fancy for seclusion. Some indefinable sensation ever prevented Ellen from speaking or writing to Herbert as she would have done to any other member of the family, but she answered him, acknowledging she deserved his hinted reproach, but owning that she could not change her conduct, even in compliance with his request; nevertheless, it grieved her much to know that he, whose approbation she unconsciously but ardently wished to gain, should believe her the capricious, unaccountable being it was evident he did: still she persevered. These, and whatever more she might have to endure, were but petty trials to which her secretly chastened mind might bend, but should not weakly bow. She knew, if her aunt were conscious of her intention, much as perhaps she might approve of the motive, she would deem it a needless sacrifice, and probably prohibit its continuance; or, if she permitted and encouraged it, the merit of her action would no longer exist, nor could she indeed, while in the enjoyment of praise, have finished a task, commenced and carried on purely for the sake of duty, and as an atonement for the past, by the sacrifice of inclination, make peace with the gracious God she had offended. Petty trials were welcome then, for if she met them with a Christian temper, a Christian spirit, she might hope that, whatever she might endure, she was progressing in His paths, "whose ways are pleasantness, and whose paths are peace;" could she but remove the lingering displeasure and distrust of her aunt and uncle, she would be quite happy.

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It so happened that Emmeline's next engagement was to the Opera, which was always Ellen's greatest conquest of inclination. She had amused herself by superintending her cousin's dressing, and a sigh so audibly escaped, that Emmeline instantly exclaimed—

"Ellen, you know you would like to go with us. In the name of all that is incomprehensible, why do you stay at home?"

"Because, much as I own I should like to go with you, I like better to stay at home."

"You really are the spirit of contradiction, Ellen. What did you sigh for?"

"Not for the Opera, Emmeline."

"Then why?"

"Because I cannot bear to feel my aunt has lost all her confidence in me."

"You are marvellously silly, Ellen; mamma is just the same to you as usual; I have observed no difference."

"Dear Emmeline, coldness is not *seen*, it is *felt;* and as you have been so happy as never to have felt it, you cannot understand what I mean."

"Nor do I ever wish to feel it. But do not look so sorrowful, dear Ellen; mamma's coldness is an awful thing to encounter, I own."

"If you have never felt it, how can you judge?" said a playful voice beside them, for Emmeline had been too deeply engrossed in arranging and disarranging a wreath of roses in her hair, and Ellen too much engaged in her own thoughts, to notice the entrance of Mrs. Hamilton.

"Is it possible you are not ready, Emmeline? what have you been about?"

"Teasing Ellen, mamma; besides, Fanny was engaged, and I could not please myself."

"Or rather you were disinclined for exertion. I have been watching you the last few moments, and you have played with that pretty wreath till it is nearly spoiled."

"I plead guilty, dear mamma, but let Fanny come, and I will be ready in a second," answered Emmeline, looking archly and caressingly in her mother's face. Mrs. Hamilton smiled, and turned as if to speak to her niece, but Ellen was gone. She was sitting in her own room a few minutes afterwards, endeavoring to collect her thoughts sufficiently to understand the book of the new opera which her cousin had lent

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er, when she was interrupted by a hand gently placed upon the leaves.

"So coldness is felt, not seen, is it, my dear Ellen? well, then, let that kiss banish it for ever," exclaimed Mrs. Hamilton, encircling the delicate form of her niece with her arm. "I have been more distant and unkind, perhaps, than was necessary, but your mysterious resolution irritated me beyond forbearance, and I have been very unjust and very cruel, have I not? will you forgive me?"

Ellen looked up in her face, and, unable to control her feelings, threw her arms around her and burst into tears.

"Nay, dearest, do not let me leave you in tears. I am satisfied you have some good reason for your conduct, though my usual penetration is entirely at fault. Will you quite content me by looking steadily in my face, and assuring me that your conscience never reproaches your conduct. I shall not have one lingering doubt then."

Ellen smiled through her tears, as she tried to obey, but her lips so quivered as she answered, that Mrs. Hamilton laughingly added, "That would never do in a court of justice, my silly little girl; no one would pronounce you innocent if thus tearfully affirmed; but as you generally compel me to regret severity, when I do venture to use it, I must be content to let you follow your own inclinations this year at least. Next season, I give you no such license; *nolens volens*, as Percy would say, I must take you out with me; you shall not hide yourself in solitude; but I do not fancy your resolution will hold good, even the remainder of this season," she added, smilingly.

"Do not, pray do not try to turn me from it, my dear, kind aunt," said Ellen, earnestly; "I do not deserve this indulgence from you, for I know how much you dislike concealment; but indeed, indeed, you shall never regret your kindness. I do not, I will not abuse it; it is only because, because—" she hesitated.

"Do not excite my curiosity too painfully, Ellen, in return for my indulgence," said Mrs. Hamilton, sportively.

"No, dear aunt, I only wish to finish a task I have set myself, and my various avocations during the day prevent my having any time, unless I take it from such amusements," said Ellen, blushing as she spoke; "indeed, that is my real and only reason."

Mrs. Hamilton fixed an anxious glance upon her, but

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though she really felt satisfied at this avowal, the actual truth never entered her mind.

"You have quite satisfied me, my dear girl; I will not ask more, and you may stay at home as often as you please. Your uncle and I have both been very unjust and very severe upon our little Ellen, but you have quite disarmed us; so you shall neither feel nor fancy my coldness any more. There is Emmeline calling as loudly for me as if I were after my time. Good night, love. God bless you! do not sit up too late, and be as happy as you can."

"I am quite happy now," exclaimed Ellen, returning, with delighted eagerness, Mrs. Hamilton's fond embrace, and she was happy. For a moment she felt lonely, as the door closed on her aunt's retreating form; but as she roused herself to seek her work, that feeling fled. When the nature of her work was sufficiently simple to require but little thought, Ellen was accustomed to improve herself by committing to memory many parts of the Bible suited for prayer, confession, or praise, so that her thoughts might not wander, during those solitary hours, in the paths of folly or of sin, but, once centred on serious things, her mind might thence become strengthened and her judgment ripened.

These lonely hours did much towards the formation of the orphan's character. Accustomed thus to commune with her Creator, to gather strength in the solitude of her chamber she was enabled, when her trial came, to meet it with a spirit most acceptable to Him who had ordained it.

CHAPTER XI.

Lord Malvern's family and Mr. Hamilton's were still in town, though the younger members of each were longing for the fresh air of the country.

One afternoon, hot and dusty from rapid riding, the young Earl St. Eval hastily, and somewhat discomposedly, entered his sister Lady Gertrude's private room.

"Thank Heaven, you are alone!" was his exclamation, as he entered; but throwing himself moodily on a couch, he did not seem inclined to say more.

"What is the matter, dear Eugene? Something has disturbed you," said Lady Gertrude, soothingly, and in a tone tending rather to allay his irritation than express her own desire to know what had happened.

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"Something—yes, Gertrude, enough to bid me forswear England again, and bury myself in a desert, where a sigh from your sex could never reach me more."

"Not even mine, Eugene?" exclaimed his sister, laying down her work, and seating herself on a stool at his feet, while she looked up in his excited features with an expression of fondness on her placid countenance. "Would you indeed forbid my company, if I implored to share your solitude?"

"My sister, my own kind sister, would I, could I deprive myself of the blessing, the comfort your presence ever brings?" replied St. Eval, earnestly. "No, dearest Gertrude, I could not refuse you, whatever you might ask."

"Then tell me now what it is that has disturbed you thus. With what new fancy are you tormenting yourself?"

"Nay, this is no fancy, Gertrude. You are, you have been wrong from the first, and I am too painfully right. Caroline does not and never will love me."

Lady Gertrude started.

"Have you been again rejected?" she demanded, a dark flush of indignant pride suffusing her cheek.

Lord St. Eval mournfully smiled.

"You are as summary in your conclusions as you say I am sometimes. No, Gertrude, I have not; I feel as if I could not undergo the torture I once experienced in saying those words which I hoped would seal my happiness."

"Nay, then, I must say them for you," said Lady Gertrude, smiling. "I have watched Caroline narrowly, and I feel so confident she loves you, that I would, without the slightest doubt or fear, consign your happiness, precious as it is to me, to her disposal."

"Forbear, Gertrude, for pity!" exclaimed Lord St. Eval, starting up and pacing the room. "You saw not what I saw last night, nor heard the cold, malicious words warning me against her; that even when she had accepted, she was false; or, if she were not false, that she still loved another. I saw it in her varying cheek, her confused manner; I heard it in her hurried accents, and this morning has confirmed all—all. Gertrude, I ever told you, my lot was not happiness; that as the fate of some men is all bright, so that of others is all gloom, and such is mine."

"Eugene, how often must I entreat you not to speak thus. Man's happiness or misery, in a great measure, depends upon himself. You have often said that when with me, you reason

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more calmly than when you think alone; only tell me coherently what has chanced, and all may not be so gloomy as you believe."

St. Eval suffered himself to be persuaded, and seating himself beside his sister, he complied with her request.

The fact was simply this. He had returned to England, at the entreaty of his sister, determined to discover if indeed there existed any hope of his at length obtaining Caroline's affections. Lady Gertrude's letter to him purposely portrayed the many amiable qualities existing in Caroline's character, and the general tenor of her words had led him to resolve that if he could indeed make so favorable an impression on her heart as to teach her to forget the past, he too would banish pride, and secure his happiness, and he hoped hers, by a second offer of his hand. Her conduct, guarded as it was, had unconsciously strengthened his hopes, and the last few weeks he had relaxed so much in his reserve, as to excite in the mind of Caroline, the hope, almost the certainty, that he no longer despised her, and created for himself many truly delightful hours It so happened that, on the evening to which he referred, Caroline had gone to a large party, under the protection of the Countess of Elmore, who, at the entreaty of the lady of the house, had obtained the permission of Mrs. Hamilton to introduce her. The young Earl had devoted himself to her the greater part of the evening, to the satisfaction of both, when his pleasure was suddenly and painfully alloyed by her visible confusion at the unexpected entrance, and still more unexpected salutation, of Lord Alphingham. Caroline had so seldom met the Viscount during the season, that she was not yet enabled to conquer her agitation whenever she beheld him. She ever dreaded his addressing her; ever felt that somewhat lurked in his insinuating voice, that would in the end lead to evil; besides which, her abhorrence towards him whenever Percy's tale flashed across her mind, which it never failed to do when he appeared, always prevented her retaining her calmness undisturbed. Lord St. Eval had left England with the impression that Alphingham was his favored rival, and his imagination instantly attributed Caroline's emotion at his entrance into a preference for the Viscount. His earnest manner suddenly became chilled, his eloquence checked. Intuitively Caroline penetrated his suspicions; the wish to prove they were mistaken and unjust increased her confusion, and instead of lessening, confirmed them. St. Eval said little more to her

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during the evening; but he watched her. He saw Lord Alphingham whisperingly address her. She appeared to become more painfully confused, and St. Eval could scarcely restrain himself from hurrying from her sight for ever; but he did restrain himself, only to be more tortured.

The Viscount now believed the hour of his vengeance was at hand, when, without the slightest exertion, he might disturb not only St. Eval's peace, but that of Caroline.

If St. Eval had but heard the few words he said to her, jealousy would have been instantly banished, but for that he was not sufficiently near; he could only mark the earnest and insinuating manner which the Viscount knew so well how to assume, and notice her confusion, and the shade of melancholy expressed on her features, which was in fact occasioned by Lord St. Eval's sudden desertion, and her annoyance at the cause. His quick imagination attributed all to the effect of Lord Alphingham's tender words. The Viscount was well known to him, and near the end of the evening approached and remained in conversation by his side, spite of the haughty reserve maintained by the young Earl, which said so plainly, "your presence is unwelcome," that it would speedily have dismissed any one less determined; but Lord Alphingham spoke admiringly and enthusiastically of Caroline. Lord St. Eval listened, as if fascinated by the very torture he endured. They were quite alone, and after a few such observations, the Viscount lowered his voice to a confidential tone, and said, triumphantly—

"Will you envy me, St. Eval, if I confess that I, more than any other man, am privileged to speak in Miss Hamilton's praise, having once had the honor of being her accepted lover, and had not cruel parents interfered, might now have claimed that lovely creature as my own? but still I do not despair, for the affections of a being so superior once given to me, as they have been, I am convinced they will never be another's. I am treating you as a friend, St. Eval, you will not betray me?"

"You may trust me, sir," replied the young Earl, coldly. "Your confidence has been given unasked, but you need not fear its betrayal."

"Thank you, my kind friend;" and the wily villain continued his deceiving tale, with an eloquence we will not trouble ourselves to repeat. It is enough to know its effect on St. Eval was to turn him from the room, his sensitive feelings

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wrought almost to madness by malignant bitterness. Lord Alphingham looked after him, and then turned his glance on Caroline, and an acute physiognomist might easily have read his inward thoughts—"My vengeance is complete."

Alphingham had more than once mentioned the name of the Duchess of Rothbury; but in such a manner, that though it sounded well enough in his tale, yet when afterwards recalled by the young Earl, he could not understand in what position she stood towards them. Lord Alphingham knew well her Grace's character; he wished St. Eval to seek her, for he felt assured what she would say would confirm his tale, and render the barrier between him and Caroline more impassable. His plan succeeded admirably: St. Eval galloped off to Airslie early the next morning. The Duchess welcomed him with the greatest cordiality, for he was a favorite; but the moment he spoke of Caroline her manner changed. She became as reserved as she had previously been warm; and when the young Earl frankly asked her if the refusal of her parents had been the only bar to her union with the Viscount, she referred him to Mr. or Mrs. Hamilton. That she was aware of something to Caroline's disadvantage appeared very evident, and that she was not the favorite she had been last year, equally so. St. Eval left her more disturbed than ever, and it was on returning from his long yet hurried ride he had sought his sister in the mood we have described.

Lady Gertrude listened with earnest attention. The tale startled her, but she disliked the very sight of Lord Alphingham; she believed him to be a bad, designing man. She felt convinced Caroline did love her brother, much as appearances were against her; and both these feelings urged her to sift the whole matter carefully, and not permit the happiness of two individuals to be sacrificed to what might be but the idle invention or exaggerations of a bad man. Her ready mind instantly formed its plan, which calmly but earnestly she imparted to her brother, and implored his consent to act upon it. Startled and disturbed, St. Eval at first peremptorily refused; but his sister's eloquence at length succeeded.

Early in the morning of the succeeding day, Caroline Hamilton received the following brief note:—

"Will you, my dear Caroline, receive me half an hour this afternoon? I have something important to say; I have vanity enough to believe as it concerns me it will interest you

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We shall be more alone at your house than mine, or I might ask you to come to me.

"Yours affectionately,
"GERTRUDE LYLE."

Completely at a loss to understand the meaning of this little note, Caroline merely wrote a line to say she should be quite at Lady Gertrude's service at the appointed time; and so deeply was she engrossed in the sad tenor of her own thoughts, that all curiosity as to this important communication was dismissed.

Three o'clock came, and so did Lady Gertrude, whose first exclamation was to notice Caroline's unusual paleness.

"Do not heed my looks, dear Gertrude, I am perfectly well; and now that you are before me, overwhelmed with curiosity as to your important intelligence," said Caroline, whose heavy eyes belied her assurance that she was quite well.

"Dearest Caroline," said Lady Gertrude, in a tone of feeling, "I am so interested in your welfare, that I cannot bear to see the change so evident in you; something has disturbed you. Show me you consider me your friend, and tell me what it is."

"Not to you, oh, not to you; I cannot, I dare not!" burst involuntarily from the lips of the poor girl, in a tone of such deep distress, that Lady Gertrude felt pained. "Gertrude, do not ask me; I own I am unhappy, very, very unhappy, but I deserve to be so. Oh, I would give worlds that I might speak it, and to you; but I cannot—will not! But do not refuse me the confidence you offered," she added, again endeavoring to smile, "I can sympathize in your happiness, though I refuse yours in my sadness."

"I am not quite sure whether I have sorrow or joy to impart," said Lady Gertrude, still feelingly; for she guessed why Caroline believed she dared not confide in her, and she hailed it as proof that she was right in her surmise, that her brother's honorable love would not be again rejected.

"Eugene seems bent on again quitting England, and I fear if he do, he will not return home again. On one little circumstance depends his final determination; my persuasions to the contrary have entirely failed."

The cheek of her companion blanched even paler than before, two or three large tears gathered in her eyes, then slowly fell, one by one, upon her tightly-clasped hands.

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"And if you have failed, who will succeed?" she asked with a strong effort.

"The chosen one, whose power over the heart of St. Eval is even greater than mine," said Lady Gertrude, steadily. "Ah, Caroline, when a man has learned to love, the affection of a sister is of little weight."

"He does love, then," thought Caroline, and her heart swelled even to bursting, "and he goes to seek her. And will not the being Lord St. Eval has honored with his love second your efforts? if she be in England, can she wish him to quit it?" she said aloud, in answer to her friend.

"If she love him, she will not," said Lady Gertrude; "but St. Eval fears to ask the question that decides his fate. Strange and wayward as he is, he would rather create certain misery for himself, than undergo the torture of being *again refused*."

For a few minutes Caroline answered not; then, with a sudden effort, rallying her energies, she exclaimed, as if in jest—

"Why, then, does he not make you his messenger; the affection you bear for him would endow you with an eloquence, I doubt much whether his own would surpass."

She would have spoken more in the same strain, but the effort failed; and turning away from Lady Gertrude's penetrating glance, which she felt was fixed upon her, though she could not meet it, she burst into tears.

More than ever convinced of the truth of her suspicions, Lady Gertrude's noble mind found it impossible to continue this mode of discovery any longer. She saw that Caroline imagined not she was the being alluded to; that not even the phrase "again refused" had startled her into consciousness, and she felt it was unkind to distress her more.

"I knew it was false," she exclaimed, as the Viscount's tale flashed across her mind; then, checking herself, she took Caroline's cold and half-reluctant hand, and added, in a voice of extreme feeling, "Caroline, dearest Caroline, forgive my having penetrated your secret; fear me not, dear girl, I honor too much the feeling which dictates your conduct. You have learned to love St. Eval; you have repented the wilful and capricious treatment he once received from you. Deny it not; nay, do not shrink from me, and think, because I appear so calm, I cannot feel for those who are dear to me, and even sympathize in their love. I do not, I will not condemn the past; I did once, I own, but since I have known you, I have

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forgiven the mistaken wilfulness of a misguided girl. You love him—confess that I am right, dearest."

Caroline's face was concealed within her hand, and almost agonized was its expression as she looked up.

"Gertrude," she said, in a low, suffocated voice, "is it well, is it kind in you thus to speak, to lead me to avow a love for one who, your own words inform me, will soon be the husband of another?"

"I said not of another, my dear girl; forgive me this stratagem to penetrate your well-preserved secret. My brother's happiness is so dear to me, I could not trust it to one of whose affection I was not certain. I am not aware I said he would soon be the husband of another; since, if he be again refused, that he never will be. Simply, then, for I have been quite tormenting enough, Eugene has striven long with himself to conquer his love, to be happy as your friend; associating with you as he does with Emmeline, but he cannot. He still loves you, Caroline, as devotedly, as faithfully—perhaps more so than when he first offered you his hand; he dares not renew that offer himself, for he feels a second refusal from your lips would wound him too deeply. Your voice may chain him to England, an altered and a happier man, or send him from its shores a misanthrope and wretched; it is for you to decide, Caroline, dearest. Must I plead with that eloquence, which you said would surpass even his own, or will the pleadings of your own kind heart suffice?"

She paused, in evident emotion, for with a faint cry Caroline had thrown herself on her neck, and buried her cheek upon her shoulder. Every limb trembled with agitation; the ecstatic delight of that one moment—doubt was, indeed, at an end. He loved her, and in spite of her faults he would cherish her with tenderness; he had chosen her as his wife—chosen her, though she had rejected, injured him, in preference to the very many she felt so much more worthy than herself; but unalloyed happiness was hers only for a few fleeting minutes; he knew not the extent of her imprudence—how strangely and deeply she had been fascinated by the arts of Lord Alphingham. Could he love, respect her as the partner of his life, did he know that? and for a moment painfully did she long to conceal it from him, to prevent his ever knowing it; but no, her innate nobility and ingenuousness of character would not be thus trampled on. She wept, and Lady Gertrude was startled, for those bitter tears were not the signs of joy.

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"Do not condemn my weakness, dearest Gertrude," she said at length, struggling for composure. "You do not know why I weep; you cannot guess the cause of tears at such a moment. Yes, you are right; I do love your brother with an affection equal to his own, but I thought it would never pass my lips; for wilfully, blindly I had rejected the affection of his good and noble heart; I had intentionally caused him pain, banished him from his country and his friends, and my punishment was just. I thought he would forget one so utterly unworthy, and the thought was agony. But, oh, Gertrude, I shall never regain his love; when he knows all, he will cease to trust me; his esteem I have lost for ever! Gertrude, bear with me; you cannot know the wretchedness it is to feel he knows not all my folly. The girl who could wilfully cast aside duty and obedience to a parent, listen to forbidden vows, weakly place her honor in the power of one against whom she had been warned—oh, Gertrude, Gertrude, when St. Eval learns this tale, he will spurn me from his heart! and yet I will not deceive him, he shall know all, and be free to act as he will—his proposals shall be no tie."

The flush of firm yet painful resolution dyed her cheek as she spoke, and checked her tears. Alarmed as she was by the incoherence yet connection of her words when attached to Lord Alphingham's hints, which still lingered on her mind, yet the high-minded Lady Gertrude felt as if Caroline's honorable determination had struck a new chord of sympathy within her heart. Integrity itself was hers, and truth in others was ever to her their most attractive quality.

"St. Eval's doubts and fears have been already painfully aroused," she said, gently; "an open explanation from you is more likely to make him happy than produce the effect you so much, though so naturally dread: fear not to impart it. In the relation you now stand to each other, the avowal of past errors will increase rather than lessen affection, by the integrity it will display; but leave it till years have passed, and if, instead of being known now, it is then discovered, then, indeed, might you fear, with some show of justice, the loss of his esteem. Such will not be now; but tell him yourself, dear Caroline, the truth or falsehood of the scandalous tale he heard a night or two ago."

"What did he hear? if you know, for pity's sake, do not conceal it from me, dearest Gertrude!" entreated Caroline, almost gasping for breath; and Lady Gertrude, without hesi-

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tation or abbreviation, related the whole tale her brother had imparted to her, dwelling on the suffering he endured, as he fancied Caroline's conduct confirmed the words he heard.

"Then is it, indeed, time for me to speak, though my tale be one of shame," she exclaimed, as Lady Gertrude paused, and indignation restored her usual energy. "Never were attentions so revolting to me as were those of Lord Alphingham that night. He knew he had no right to address me, and, therefore, did he ever refrain when mamma was present. Gertrude, solemnly, sacredly, I protest he has no hold on my affections—he dare not say he has—nor ever again venture to demand my hand; it has been irrevocably refused. Not only would my own will prevent my ever becoming his, but I have—" she paused a moment, for Percy's fatal secret was on the point of escaping from her lips, but checking herself, she added, "I am not at liberty to say why, but an inseparable barrier is placed between us. Listen to me, Gertrude, you will condemn me, be it so; but I implore, I beseech you to believe me true." Then, without further hesitation, Caroline briefly yet circumstantially related all those events in her life with which our readers are so well acquainted. She did not suppress one point, or endeavor in the least to excuse herself, and Lady Gertrude, as she listened to that unvarnished tale of youthful error, felt her heart glow more warmly towards her companion, and her eye glisten in sympathy for the pain she felt Caroline was inflicting on herself. Lady Gertrude could feel for others; twice had her carriage been announced, but she heeded not the summons; a third came, just as Caroline had ceased to speak, and silently she rose to depart. She met the imploring look of her young friend, and folding her to her heart, she said, in a low and gentle voice—

"Ask not me, my dearest girl; St. Eval shall come and speak for himself." She kissed her affectionately, and was gone.

Caroline seated herself on a low couch, and closing her eyes on every outward object, she gave herself up to thought. Might she indeed be happy—were the errors of her former years so forgiven, that she would indeed be blessed with the husband of her choice? Had St. Eval so conquered pride as again to seek her love—would the blessing of her parents now sanctify her marriage? it could not be; it was too much bliss—happiness of which she was utterly unworthy. Time rolled by unheeded in these meditations; she was quite unconscious that nearly half an hour had elapsed since Lady Gertrude had

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left her; scarcely did it appear five minutes, and yet it must have been more, for it was the voice of St. Eval himself that roused her, that addressed her as his own bride. St. Eval himself, who clasped her impetuously to his beating heart, imprinted one long, lingering kiss upon her cheek, and murmured blessings on her head. He had waited for the return of his sister to the carriage, in a state of impatience little to be envied, flung himself in after her, and in a very brief space had heard and heard again every particular of her interview with Caroline. His doubts were satisfied, not a lingering fear remained.

"Gertrude told me, you said not to her the magic word that will seal my happiness, though she wrung from you that precious secret of your love," said the young Lord, after many very fond words had been exchanged between them, and nearly an hour had passed away in that unrestrained confidence; "nor have I heard it pass your lips. You have told me that you love me, Caroline; will you not promise that but a very short time shall pass, ere you will indeed be mine; that you will not sentence me to a long probation ere that happy day is fixed?"

"It is not in my power to answer you, St. Eval," and though her tone was sportive, her words startled him. "I cannot even promise to be yours; my fate is not in my own hands."

"Caroline!" exclaimed the alarmed young man, "what can you mean?"

"Simply, that I have vowed solemnly and sacredly never to marry without the consent and blessing of my parents. I have given you all I can, to them I refer you for the rest."

"Then I am satisfied," replied St. Eval, the flush of joyous excitement staining his cheek, and rendering his expressive countenance more than usually handsome, by the animation it produced.

Mrs. Hamilton, with Emmeline and Ellen, had returned from their ride rather later than usual, for they had gone to see a friend some few miles out of town, and finding it near the hour of dinner, they had dispersed to their dressing-rooms instead of entering the drawing-room as usual. On inquiring for Caroline, if she had been out with Lady Gertrude, or was still at home, she heard, to her extreme astonishment, that Miss Hamilton had not gone out, but that Lord St. Eval had been with her above an hour, nor had she left him to obey the

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summons of the dressing-bell, as usual. A throb of pleasure shot through the heart of Mrs. Hamilton, she scarcely knew wherefore, for it was no uncommon thing for Lord St. Eval to spend an hour at her house, but it was that he should thus have sought the society of Caroline alone.

"Had either of her sons been with him?" she asked, and the answer was in the negative.

Martyn silently concluded her task, for she saw deep thought was on her lady's brow, which she was too respectful to disturb; an earnest thought it was, it might have been that silent prayer had mingled with it. Still was that wish uppermost in Mrs. Hamilton's mind, that she might one day see her Caroline the happy wife of Lord St. Eval; but when she entered the drawing-room, words were not needed to explain the scene before her. Mr. Hamilton had drawn his daughter to him, and was pressing the young Earl's hand in his with a grasp that spoke volumes.

"St. Eval, you have been too long the son of my affections, for one instant to doubt my consent," Mrs. Hamilton heard her husband say, as she entered; "it is yours, freely, gladly. Speak not of fortune, I would give my child to you, had you but yourself to offer. But I am but a secondary personage in this business," he added, playfully; "there is the enchantress who holds the fate of my Caroline more firmly than I do. Away with you, St. Eval, plead your cause to her."

"Caroline, my own, does your happiness depend on my consent, or have you done this merely for my sake?" murmured Mrs. Hamilton, as her child clung in silence to her neck, and Lord St. Eval seized her hand and pressed it to his lips, as if eloquent silence should tell his tale, too, better than words. Mrs. Hamilton spoke in a voice so low, as to be heard only by Caroline.

"Speak to me, love; tell me that St. Eval will be the husband of your free, unbiassed choice, and my fondest blessing shall be yours." Caroline's answer was inaudible to all, save to the ear of maternal affection, to her mother it was enough.

"Take her, St. Eval; my consent, my earnest wish to behold you united has long been yours; may God in heaven bless you, my children, and make you happy in each other!"

Solemnly she spoke; her earnestness was affecting, it struck to their hearts; for a moment, there was silence, which Mrs. Hamilton was the first to break.

"Does my Caroline intend appearing at dinner in this cos-

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tume?" she asked, playfully, alluding to her daughter's morn ing dress. Startled and blushing, Caroline, for the first time, perceived her mother was dressed for dinner, and her father, determining to banish all appearance of gravity, held up his watch, which pointed to some few minutes after the usual dinner-hour. Glad to escape for a few minutes to the solitude of her own room, Caroline hastily withdrew her hand from St. Eval's detaining grasp, and smiling a brief farewell, brushed by Emmeline and Ellen, who were that instant entering, without speaking indeed, but with very evident marks of confusion, which Mr. Hamilton very quickly explained to the extreme satisfaction of all parties.

Caroline was not long before she returned. Happiness had caused her eyes to sparkle with a radiance her parents had not seen for many a long day; and they felt as they gazed on her, now indeed was she worthy to be the honored wife of St. Eval, and their thoughts were raised in silent unison to heaven for the blessing thus vouchsafed to them. And scarcely could Mr. Hamilton restrain the emotion which swelled his bosom, as he thought, had it not been for the untiring care the bright example of that mother, his child, instead of being a happy bride, might now have been—he shuddered as he thought, and the inward words were checked, he could not give them vent, they were hidden in the silent recesses of his own breast; and did not that same thought dwell in the mind of his wife, when she contrasted the present with the past? It did, but she looked not on herself as the cause of her child's escape from wretchedness and sin. Her efforts she knew would have been as nought, without the blessing of Him whose aid she had ever sought; and if indeed the thought of her had arrested Caroline on the brink of ruin, it was His work, and Him alone she praised. She looked on the glowing countenance of her daughter; she marked the modest gentleness of her demeanor, the retiring dignity with which she checked the effusions of her own fond affection, and received the attentions of her devoted lover, and she felt sure those few moments of solitude had been passed in thanksgiving and prayer to Him who had pardoned the errors of the past, and granted such unlooked-for joy. And she guessed aright, for the mind of Caroline had not been entirely engrossed by the bright and glowing visions which anticipation in such a moment of our lives is apt to place before us. Her thoughts during the last year had been secretly under the guidance of

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the most rigid self-control, and thus permitted her to raise them from the happiness of earth to blessedness yet more exalted. Oh! who can say that religion is the heavy chain that fetters us to gloom and everlasting sadness; that in chastening the pleasures of earth, it offers no substantial good in return? True piety, opening the heart by its sweet, refreshing influence, causes us to enjoy every earthly blessing with a zest, the heart in which the love of God is not an inmate will seek in vain to know. It is piety that strengthens, purifies affection. Piety, that looks on happiness vouchsafed us here, as harbingers of a state where felicity will be eternal. Piety that, in lifting up the grateful soul to God, heightens our joys, and renders that pure and lasting which would otherwise be evanescent and fleeting. Piety, whose soft and mildly-burning torch continues to enlighten life, long, long after the lustre of worldly pleasures has passed away. It was this blessed feeling, kindled in earliest infancy by the fostering hand of parental love, which now characterized and composed every emotion of Caroline's swelling bosom, which bade her feel that this indeed was happiness. With blushing modesty she received the eagerly-offered congratulations of her affectionate family; the delighted embrace which Percy in the enthusiasm of his joy found himself compelled to give her.

"Now, indeed, may I hope the past will never again cross my mind to torment me," he whispered to his sister, and wrung St. Eval's hand with a violence that forced the young man laughingly to cry for mercy. There had been a shade of unusual gloom shrouding the open countenance and usually frank demeanor of Percy since his return from Oxford, for which his parents and sisters could not account, but as he seemed to shrink from all observation on the subject, they did not ask the cause; but this unexpected happiness seemed to make him for a few following days as usual the gayest, merriest member of his amiable family.

Often in these days of happiness did Caroline think on the qualities which Lady Gertrude had once said should adorn the wife of her brother. Faults he could pardon, if they were redeemed by affection, and ingenuousness unsullied by the slightest artifice. Affection she well knew she possessed; but she also knew that, to be as unreserved as would form the happiness of her husband, she must effectually banish that pride, which she knew still lurked within. Often would she converse on these things when alone with her mother, and

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implore her advice as to the best method of securing not only the love but the esteem of St. Eval.

"Gertrude was quite right in the estimate of her brother's character," Mrs. Hamilton would at such times observe, her fond heart fully repaid for past anxiety and disappointment by this confidence in her child; "and so too are you, dearest, in your idea that not the faintest sign of pride must mark your intercourse with him. Perhaps he is more reserved than proud; indeed, in his case, I cannot call it pride, but it is that kind of reserve which would jar most painfully did it come in contact with any thing resembling pride. Had you grown up such as you were in childhood, your union with St. Eval, much as you might think you loved each other, would not have been productive of lasting happiness to either. Let him see dependence is not merely a profession which your every action would contradict; from independence springs so many evils, that I feel sure you will avoid it. It is, I regret to say, a prevailing error in those circles wherein your rank will entitle you to mingle; an error that must ever endanger conjugal happiness. When a woman marries, the world, except as the arbiter of propriety, ought to be forgotten; all her endeavors to please, to soothe, to cheer, must still be exerted even more than before marriage, but exerted only for her husband; not one little pleasing art, not one accomplishment should be given up, but used as affection dictates, to enhance her value in the eyes of him whose felicity it should be her principal aim to increase. You will be placed in an exalted station in the opinion of the world, my beloved child, a station of temptation, flattery, danger, more so than has ever yet been yours; but I do not tremble now as I did, too forebodingly, when the world was first opened to your view. You have learned to mistrust your own strength, to seek it where alone it can be found, to examine your every action by the Word of God, and with these feelings you are safe. My Caroline will not fail in duty to her husband or herself."

"Nor to you, my mother, my devoted mother!" exclaimed Caroline, as she fondly kissed her. "It is to you, next to my God, I owe this blessing; and oh, if it be my lot to be a mother, may I be to my children, as far, at least, as one so much inferior in piety and virtue can be, what you have been to me. Oh, might I but resemble you, as my full heart has so lately longed, St. Eval might be happy!"

At the earnest entreaty of St. Eval and Caroline, both

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families consented that the ceremonial of their marriage should take place in the same venerable church where the first childish prayers of Caroline had ascended from a house of God, and the service be performed by the revered and pious rector of Oakwood, the clergyman who, from her earliest childhood, she had been taught to respect and love, as the humble representative of Him whose truths he so ably taught. Caroline had consented to name the second week of September as the period of her espousals. The few chosen friends of both families who were to be invited to the ceremony were to assemble in the hospitable halls of Oakwood, and earnestly did every member of Mr. Hamilton's family hope that the long-absent sailor, Edward Fortescue, who was soon expected home, might arrive in time to be present at the marriage of his cousin. How the young heart of his orphan sister fluttered with delight at the thought of beholding him again we will not attempt to describe, but it was shared with almost equal warmth by Mrs. Hamilton, whose desire was so great that her gallant nephew, the brave preserver of her husband, might be present at the approaching joyful event, that she laughingly told Ellen she certainly would postpone the ceremony till Edward arrived, whatever opposition she might have to encounter.

The engagement of the Right Honorable Earl St. Eval, the heir to the marquisate of Malvern, embracing such rich possessions, with a plain gentleman's daughter, was a matter of mingled wonder, scorn, admiration, and applause to the fashionable world; but these opinions and emotions were little regarded, save as a matter of continued jest to Percy, who amused himself by collecting all the reports he could, and repeating them at home, warning them against a marriage which caused such a universal sensation. It might be supposed this sensation would have been felt in various ways in the family of Montrose Grahame; but it happened that Annie was so engrossed with her own plans, her mind so occupied by one interesting subject, that she and Lord Alphingham had but little time to think of any thing but each other. Annoyed they were indeed, for all their designs were foiled; St. Eval and Caroline were happy, spite of their efforts to the contrary. Lady Helen was really so delighted at the prospects of Caroline, who had ever been a favorite with her, that she actually exerted herself so much as to call in person to offer her best wishes, and promise that she would spend the whole winter at Woodlands, to be present at the ceremony. Lilla was over

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joyed, for Mrs. Hamilton promised she should be among the guests at Oakwood. Mr. Grahame, whose friendship with Mr. Hamilton would have and did render him most interested in the event, was at Paris when their engagement was first published, but his warmly-written letters to his friend proclaimed his intention of very soon returning to England, but till then entreating the young couple to accept his sincerest prayers and best wishes for their happiness, and warmly congratulated Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton on the prospects of their child; but there was a sadness pervading his letters which gave them pain to note, for they knew too well the cause.

The letters of Mary Greville, too, added pleasure to the betrothed. Informed by Herbert of both past and present events, St. Eval's long affection for Caroline, which he playfully hoped would solve the mystery of his not gratifying her wishes, and falling in love with Miss Manvers, Mary wrote with equal sportiveness, that she was quite satisfied with his choice, and pleased that his residence at Lago Guardia had enabled her to become so well acquainted with one about to be so nearly connected with her Herbert.

About a week or fortnight before Mr. Hamilton's intended return to Oakwood, Percy one morning received a letter which appeared to produce excessive agitation. But as he evidently did not wish it remarked, no notice was taken, except by Herbert, to whom alone he had shown the letter, and who seemed equally interested, though not so much agitated by its contents. To the anxious inquiries of his parents, if individual embarrassment or distress occasioned Percy's uneasiness, Herbert answered readily in the negative; that the letter informed them of the death of an unfortunate individual in whose fate both he and Percy had been most deeply interested. Trusting in the well-known integrity of their sons, Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton inquired no farther, and dismissed the subject; but Percy did not rouse himself from his gloomy abstraction till startled by intelligence, which regard for his father's friend Grahame could not permit him to bear with calmness.

Two mornings after the receipt of that letter, as the family, with the addition of St. Eval, were sitting together after breakfast, ere they separated to the various avocations of the day, Lord Henry D'Este bustled in with a countenance expressive of something extraordinary.

"Have you heard the news?" was his first eager exclamation.

"If we had, it would be no news," replied Emmeline

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archly; "but we have heard nothing. Papa has something else to do than to seek out news for me, ditto the Right Honorable Lord St. Eval. Percy has been suddenly converted into the spirit of gloom, and to Herbert it is in vain to look for gossip, so, for pity's sake, satisfy my curiosity."

"Perhaps you will say I have been exciting it unnecessarily," he answered. "An elopement is too common a thing now to cause much astonishment."

"It depends on the parties," observed Mr. Hamilton. "Who are they?"

"Those, or rather one of them, I fear, for her father's sake, in whom you will be too deeply interested—Lord Alphingham and Miss Grahame."

"Annie!" burst from Caroline's lips, in an accent of distress that struck all, and fell somewhat painfully on Lord St. Eval's ear, when starting from the seat she had occupied near him, she sprung forward, and wildly continued, "when—when? Lord Henry, for pity's sake, tell me! is there no time? Can they not be overtaken? When did they go?"

Bewildered at the wild earnestness of her manner, at the muttered execration of Percy, Lord Henry was for a moment silent; but, on the repeated entreaty of Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, he said that the particulars were not yet all known, except that she had been staying with her friend, that same lady of rank in whose family Miss Malison had been installed; that from her house the elopement had taken place, when, he did not exactly know; the report had only that morning gained credit. Lady Helen was not in the least aware of what had passed, nor would she, in all probability, till Annie's own letter announced it, as she turned a careless ear to all that her friends had hinted: He greatly feared, however, that it was useless to think of overtaking them; they had been seen and recognized, on the road between York and Berwick, by a friend of his, three days previous. He had at first regarded his friend's letter as a mere jest, but finding he had written the same to many others, and that the report was gaining ground, he felt sufficient interest in Mr. Grahame to discover the truth, that he might be informed of it, and take measures accordingly, and as Grahame was from home, he thought the best thing he could do was to tell the whole story to Mr. Hamilton.

"And is there indeed no hope? Can they not be over taken?" again demanded Caroline, almost choked with an agi tation for which even her parents could not account.

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Lord Henry did not think there was the slightest possibility, and unable to control her emotion, for she could not forget the long years she had regarded Annie as her friend, the favorite companion of her childhood, Caroline sunk, pale as death, on the nearest seat. Her mother and St. Eval approached her in some alarm, the former to demand the cause of this agitation, and implore her to be calm; the latter to connect, with a swelling heart and trembling frame, this deep emotion with the words of Lord Alphingham, which he vainly endeavored to forget; but Percy alone had power to restore her to any degree of composure; taking her trembling hand in his, he whispered a few words, and their effect was instantaneous.

"Thank God, she will be at least his wife!" escaped Caroline's quivering lips, and then burst into tears.

"Mother, do not ask more now. St. Eval, do not doubt my sister, her agitation arose for Miss Grahame alone, not for the villain, the cold-hearted villain, Alphingham!" exclaimed Percy, in a low but impressive voice, as he alternately addressed his mother and the Earl, and then, as if fearing their further questions, he hastily turned away to join his father in demanding every possible information from Lord Henry; and perceiving that Caroline was becoming calm, and also that St. Eval looked somewhat disturbed, Mrs. Hamilton followed her son to the other end of the room. Still St. Eval spoke not, and Caroline, as she read the reproach, the doubt expressed upon his features, for a moment felt her natural pride swelling high within her, that he could for one moment permit a doubt of her truth to enter his mind; but her resolution, her mother's advice, the observation of Lady Gertrude, all rose to combat with returning pride, and they conquered.

"Eugene, dearest Eugene," she said, as she extended her hand towards him, "you have, indeed, every reason to look disturbed. In my deep anxiety for her whom I so long loved as my friend, I forgot that my agitation might indeed confirm the unworthy tale you heard. Forgive me, Eugene; I know that I have pained you, but, indeed, I meant it not. If Lord Alphingham did cross my mind, it was in detestation, in abhorrence, that he should thus have acted. I trembled for Annie, for her alone, for the fearful fate that, when Lord Henry first spoke, I believed must be her lot. Were I at liberty to disclose all, you would not wonder such should have been my feelings, Eugene," she added, in an accent of gentle

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reproach. "Must I indeed solemnly and sacredly assure you, that my agitation was occasioned by no lingering affection for Lord Alphingham? will nothing else satisfy you? Is it kind, is it generous thus to doubt me?"

Softened at once, ashamed of his own jealous tendency, the young Earl could only implore her forgiveness, assure her he had not the faintest doubt remaining; and suggesting, air would revive her sooner than any thing, he drew her to the open window of the adjoining room, which looked out on the little garden, and there they remained in apparently earnest conversation, till Caroline, to her extreme astonishment, was summoned by her cousin to luncheon, and Lord St. Eval suddenly discovered he had permitted the whole morning to slip away in idleness, when he imagined he had so very much to do.

Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton were more grieved than surprised at the intelligence they had heard; but in what manner to act, what measures to take they knew not. Grahame was expected to arrive in England on the morrow, or the next day at the farthest, and his agony they dreaded to witness; they feared lest reports should reach him ere he was in any way prepared, and Mr. Hamilton determined on travelling instantly to Dover, that he might be there ready to receive him, and console to the best of his ability this mistaken but truly affectionate father. Percy, rousing himself, entered with activity into all his father's plans; but Mrs. Hamilton fancied that he too had some plan to follow up, which his absence two or three days from home confirmed. Nor was it idle sympathy she felt; that same day she sought the residence of Lady Helen.

Scarcely ever did she enter that house without being struck by the melancholy pervading it. Wrapped in her own pleasures, her own desires and amusements, Annie never cast one thought on her mother, whose declining health it would have been her duty to tend and soothe; indeed, she scarcely ever entered her room, and believing her parent's ailments were all fancy, made it a rule to take no notice of them. Cecil liked not gloom and quiet, and his fashionable cousins occupied almost all his time. He could not comprehend, much less return the deep affection his mother felt for him; and Lilla, whose naturally warm heart and right principles would have made her an affectionate attendant on her mother's couch, was seldom at home to perform her part. But already had Lady Helen felt the difference a year's residence with Mrs. Douglas

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had made in her younger girl; already had her indolent nature felt the comfort of her presence, and bitterly regretted when her short vacations were at an end, for then she was indeed alone.

On being admitted, Mrs. Hamilton fancied, somewhat eagerly, the first person she encountered at Lady Helen's was her young friend, clad, it seemed, for walking, with traces of anxiety and sorrow clearly written on her countenance.

"The very person I was about to seek," she exclaimed, in a voice of intense relief, springing down the stairs to reach her friend. "Dearest Mrs. Hamilton, mamma—Annie—" The words choked her, and she burst into tears.

"Compose yourself, love, I know all; only tell me how your mother bears the shock?" whispered Mrs. Hamilton, instantly penetrating at once the truth, that either the report had reached Lady Helen, or she had received the intelligence direct from her daughter; and anxious to escape the curious eyes of the domestics who were in the hall, she hastily yet kindly drew the weeping Lilla to the nearest parlor, and, closing the door, succeeded in hearing all she desired. Lilla said, her mother, only an hour before, had received a letter from Annie, briefly announcing her marriage, and informing her they intended very shortly to embark for the Netherlands from Leith, thence to make a tour in Germany and Italy, which would prevent their returning to England for some time, when she hoped all present irritation at her conduct would have subsided; that her father's severity had tended to this step. Had he been kind, and like other fathers, she would have sacrificed her own desires, conscious that his reason for prohibiting her union with Alphingham was good, however it might be secret; but when, from her childhood, her every wish had been unreasonably thwarted, she was compelled to choose in such a case for herself. She should be sorry to live in enmity with her father, but even if she did, she never could regret the step she had taken. To her mother she wrote as if assured of her forgiveness, or rather her continued favor; forgiveness she did not seem to think it at all necessary to ask, saying, she was sure her kind and indulgent mother would not regret her union with Lord Alphingham, when she solemnly declared it had made her happier than she had ever been before. Such Lilla said were the contents of her letter; but the warm-hearted girl could not refer without indignation to the utter want of affection which breathed throughout

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Her mother, Lilla continued to say, had been in a most alarming state from the time she received the letter, but, she fancied, occasioned more by the dread of what her father would say on his return, than from Annie's conduct.

When Mrs. Hamilton saw Lady Helen, she felt that Lilla was right. The unhappy mother reproached her own carelessness, indolence, and Annie's ingratitude, but it was evident the dread of her husband was uppermost in her mind—a dread which made her so extremely ill, from a succession of violent and uncontrolled hysterics, that Mrs. Hamilton did not leave her the whole of that day; nor would she permit the unhappy father to enter his wife's apartment on his return, till she had exacted from him a promise to forbear all reproaches towards his suffering wife, all allusions to the past.

With the stern brevity of the injured, Grahame addressed his disobedient child. His forgiveness and his blessing he sent, though he said she had asked for neither; that he bore no enmity to her, he wrote; his home and his heart were ever open to receive her, should she again require the protection of the one, the affection of the other. She had chosen for herself; linked her fate with one against whom many tongues had spoken, and he could only pray that her present happiness might never change. Lord Alphingham he did not name. Lady Helen's letter was a curious mixture of reproach and affection, complaint and congratulation; and Annie might have found it difficult to discover in what manner she was affected towards the Viscount, or with regard to the elopement i self. Perhaps of all the letters she received from home, Lilla's was the most irritating to her, for it was written in all the bitter indignation, the unchecked reproaches of a young and ardent spirit, in whose eyes the heartlessness of her letter was inexcusable, and she wrote as she thought. Annie, as might have been expected, deigned her no reply. A few languidly-written letters her mother received from her during her tour; but the chief of her correspondence was reserved for Miss Malison and the lady who had so ably assisted their secret plans. The friendly influence of Mr. Hamilton succeeded, after a few days, in restoring his friend to comparative outward composure, although the wound within, he too sadly felt, was beyond his power to heal.

A few days passed in peace. Mrs. Hamilton and her family were anticipating with pleasure the quiet happiness of

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Oakwood, and the event then to take place. Scarcely a week intervened before their departure, when they were one afternoon startled by the appearance of Grahame, whose countenance bore the pallid hue of death, and every action denoted the most fearful agitation. Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, Caroline, and St. Eval, were alone present, and they gazed on him in unfeigned alarm.

"Hamilton, I start for Brussels to-night," was his salutation, as he entered.

"Brussels!" repeated Mr. Hamilton. "Grahame, you are beside yourself. What affairs can call you to Brussels so suddenly?"

"Affairs—business; ay, of such weight, I cannot rest till they are attended to. Hamilton, you are astonished; you think me mad; oh, would to God I were!" and striking his forehead with his clenched hand, he paced the room in agony.

Ere his friend could approach or address him, he suddenly paused before Caroline, who was watching him in alarm and commiseration, and grasping her arm, with a pressure that pained her, he said, in a voice which blanched her cheek with horror—

"Hamilton, look on this girl, and, as you love me, answer me. Could you be a Roman father, did you see her dishonored—the victim, the wilful victim of a base, a treacherous, miserable villain?—say, could you wash away the blackening stain with blood—with her blood—or his, or both? Speak to me—counsel me. My child, my child!" he groaned aloud.

"Grahame, you are ill; my dear friend, you know not what you say," exclaimed Mr. Hamilton, terrified both at his wildness and his words. "Come with me till this strange mood has passed; I entreat it as a favor—come."

"Passed—till this mood has passed! Hamilton, it will never pass till the grave has closed over Annie and myself. Oh, Hamilton, my friend, I had reconciled myself to this marriage; taught myself to believe that, as his wife, she might be happy; and—oh God! can I say the words?—she is not his wife—he is already married." His trembling limbs refused support, and he sunk, overcome by his emotion, on a chair. Without a minute's pause, a moment's hesitation, and ere her father could find words to reply, Caroline sprang forward, and kneeling beside the wretched father, she seized his hand—

"Be calm, be comforted, dearest Mr. Grahame," she exclaimed, in a voice that caused him to gaze at her with aston

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ishment. "It is a mistaken tale you have heard; a cruel falsehood, to disturb your peace. Lord Alphingham was married, but Annie is now his lawful, wedded wife; the partner of his youth, the devoted woman whom for eight years he deserted, is no more. She died the day preceding that which united Lord Alphingham to your child. I speak truth, Mr. Grahame; solemnly, sacredly, I affirm it. Percy will tell you more; I was pledged to secrecy. On her death-bed she demanded a solemn promise from all who knew her tale, never to divulge it, lest it should prove to the discredit of her cruel husband, whom her last accents blessed. I promised Percy it should be sacred, unless an emergency demanded it. Be comforted, Mr. Grahame; indeed, I speak the truth. Lord Alphingham was free, restrained by no tie, when he was united to your child." Rapidly, hurriedly, she had spoken, for she trembled at the wild gaze Grahame had fixed upon her. Caroline's voice rang clear and distinct upon his ear, and every word brought comfort, still he spoke not; but when she ceased, when slowly, more impressively her last words were spoken, he uttered a faint cry, and folding her slight form convulsively to his heart, sobbed like an infant on her shoulder. Thoughts unutterable thronged the minds of Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton as they too listened with fascinated eagerness to Caroline's words; thoughts, not only of the present, but the past, rushed quickly to their minds. A year previously Lord Alphingham's wife still lived; though he, villain as he was, had heeded not the sacred tie. Well could they enter into the blessed relief her words had brought to the distracted father. Mr. Hamilton permitted some minutes to elapse in silence, and then, gently withdrawing Caroline from Grahame's still convulsive hold, said a few words, in a voice which, though low, expressed that kindly sympathy which seldom fails to reach the inmost soul; and finally succeeded in passing his arm through that of his friend, and leading him to an adjoining room, where, after a time, Grahame conquered his agitation sufficiently to give a connected account of the means through which he had learned the information which had so distracted him. Caroline's words and the influence of his friend restored him to comparative composure; but all was not at peace within until Percy had obeyed the summons of his father, and the information of his sister was confirmed in every point by him. He related the tale of Mrs. Amesfort, with which our readers are already well acquainted, with the addition of her death, of which the

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letter he received a few days previous had informed him. Many affecting interviews he had had with her, in which she spoke of her husband, her mother, her child, so fondly, that the tears often started to the eyes of Percy, though her own were dry. In parting from him, she had again implored him not to divulge her secret, unless the interest of her child demanded it, or he saw urgent occasion.

"Let not the breath of calumny sully the name of my child," she said, grasping his hand with a painful effort. "Let her not be looked on as a child of shame, when her birth is as pure and noble as any in the land. If her birth be questioned, let the whole world know she is the daughter of Lord Alphingham. In my mother's care is the certificate of my marriage, also of the christening of my Agnes. But if nothing be demanded, if her lot be happy, it is better both for father and daughter that they remain unknown to each other."

Percy had made the solemn promise she demanded, but the remembrance of her pale features, her drooping form, had haunted him on his return home, and caused that deep gloom his family had remarked. It was more than a week after Mrs. Amesfort's death, before her afflicted mother could write the tidings to the young man, who, on hearing of Annie's conduct, had instantly and actively set about obtaining the exact date of the unfortunate lady's death, and also that of the Viscount's hasty marriage in Scotland. The result was most satisfactory; rather more than a week had elapsed between the two events, and his marriage with Annie was, consequently, sacred and binding. Percy also said, Mrs. Morley had mentioned her intention of instantly returning to Ireland with the little Agnes, from whom she fervently prayed she might never be compelled to part.

Relieved, and truly thankful, Grahame consulted with his friends on the best plan to pursue to silence the rumors which, having overheard in a public coffee-house, would, he had no doubt, be immediately circulated over the town. Mrs. Morley said, she had written to inform Lord Alphingham of the death of his broken-hearted wife, inclosing one from the ill-fated Agnes herself. He was, therefore, perfectly aware of the validity of the second marriage, for Percy had inquired and found the letter had been forwarded; there was no need of communication with him on that point. Grahame's first care was to travel to Scotland, and obtain the registry of their marriage; his next, to proceed to Brussels, with Mr. Hamilton

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and coolly and decisively inform Lord Alphingham that, unless the ceremony was publicly solemnized a second time, in his presence, and before proper witnesses, other proceedings would be entered upon against him. Astonished and somewhat alarmed as Lord and Lady Alphingham were at his unexpected appearance, the former had too many sins on his conscience to submit to a public *exposé*, which he might justly fear was intended in this threat, and, with great apparent willingness, he consented. The ceremony was again performed; Grahame possessed himself of the certificate, and left Brussels, with the half-formed resolution that, while Lord Alphingham lived, he would never see his child again. The death of the Right Honorable Viscountess Alphingham, and the subsequent marriage in Scotland of the Right Honorable Lord Viscount Alphingham with Miss Grahame, appeared in all the newspapers. The splendor of the second solemnization of their nuptials in Brussels was the next theme of wonder and gossip, and by the time that subject was exhausted, London had become deserted, and Lord and Lady Alphingham might probably have returned to the metropolis without question or remark; but such was not Lord Alphingham's intention. He feared that probably were his history publicly known he might be shunned for the deceit he had displayed; and he easily obtained Annie's glad consent to fix their residence for a few years in Paris. Irritated as in all probability he was, when he found himself again fettered, yet he so ably concealed this irritation, that his wife suspected it not, and for a time she was happy.

As Lord and Lady Alphingham are no longer concerned in our tale, having nothing more in common with those in whom, we trust, our readers are much more interested, we may here formally dismiss them in a few words. They lived, but if true happiness dwells only with the virtuous and good, with the upright and the noble, it gilded not their lot; but if those who are well acquainted with the morality of the higher classes of the French capital can pronounce that it dwells there, then, indeed, might they be said to possess it, for such was their lives. They returned not again to England, but lived in France and Italy, alternately. Alphingham, callous to every better and softer feeling, might have been happy, but not such was the fate of Annie. Bitterly, ere she died, did she regret her folly and disobedience; remorse was sometimes busy within, though no actual guilt dimmed her career: she drowned

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the voice of conscience in the vortex of frivolity and fashion But the love she bore for Alphingham was the instrument of retribution: her husband neglected, despised, and frequently deserted her. Let no woman unite herself with sin, in the vain hope of transforming it to virtue. Such thoughts had not, indeed, been Annie's, when wilfully she sought her fate. She knew not the man she had chosen for her husband; she disregarded the warnings she had heard. Fatal delusion! she found, too late, the fate her will had woven was formed of knotty threads, the path that she had sought beset with thorns, from which she could not break. No children blessed her lot, and it was better thus—for they would have found but little happiness. The fate of Lord Alphingham's child, the little Agnes, was truly happy in her own innocence; she lived on for many years in ignorance of her real rank and the title of her father, under the careful guidance of that relative to whom her mother's last words had tenderly consigned her.

Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton remained but little longer in town; Caroline's *trousseau* was quite completed, for but very few weeks now intervened ere her marriage. Lady Gertrude had devoted herself to the young Earl, and remained with him superintending the improvements and embellishments of his beautiful estate, Castle Terryn, in the vicinity of the Tamar, on the Cornwall side, which was being prepared with the greatest taste and splendor. Lady Gertrude was to remain with her brother till a week previous to the wedding, when she joined her family at Oakwood, where they had been staying since their departure from London, at the earnest persuasions of both Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton. Seldom had the banks of the placid Dart been so gay as they were on this occasion; the beautiful villas scattered around were all taken by the friends of the parties about to be so nearly connected. Rejoicings were not only confined to the higher class; the poor, for many miles round, hailed the expected marriage of Miss Hamilton as an occasion of peculiar and individual felicity. Blessings on her lot, prayers for her welfare, that Lord St. Eval might prove himself worthy of her, were murmured in many a rustic cot, and every one was employed in earnest thought as to the best, the most respectful mode of testifying their humble sympathy in the happiness of their benefactors. Such were the feelings with which high and low regarded the prosperity of the good.

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CHAPTER XII.

"WHO amongst this merry party will become sufficiently sober to assist me in a work of charity?" was Mrs. Hamilton's address, one afternoon, as she entered her daughter's room, where Emmeline, her young friends, Lady Florence and Lady Emily Lyle, and even the usually quiet Ellen, were employing themselves in drawing, embroidery, and such light amusements as diligently as the merry speech, the harmless joke, and the joyous laugh of truly innocent enjoyment would permit.

"A case of extreme distress has come before me," she continued, "for which alms and other relief will not be sufficient; clothing is principally required. Can any of you consent to put aside these pretty things for a few days, merely for the sake of obliging me and doing good? I have set every hand to work, and now for further assistance have come to you. To whom shall I appeal?"

"To me—to me—to me!" every voice exclaimed spontaneously, and they eagerly crowded round her to know what she required, what case of distress had occurred, for whom they were to work.

Gratified and pleased at their eagerness, Mrs. Hamilton smilingly imparted all they wished to know. The simple tale drew from the artless group many exclamations of pity, combined with the earnest desire to relieve in whatever way their kind friend would dictate, and their task was received by all with every demonstration of pleasure.

"You, too, Ellen," said Mrs. Hamilton, smiling; "I thought you once said you had no time for work."

"Not for ornamental work, aunt; but I hope you have never asked in vain for my assistance in such a case as this," answered Ellen, blushing as she spoke.

"No, love; my words did you injustice. But you appear to have found time for ornamental work also, if this very pretty wreath be yours," said Mrs. Hamilton, bending over her niece's frame, and praising the delicacy of her flowers.

"Oh, I have time for any and every thing now," exclaimed Ellen, in a tone of animation, so very unusual, that not only her aunt but her young companions looked at her with astonishment.

"Ellen, you are becoming more and more incomprehensible,' said Emmeline, laughing. "If Edward do not come

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home soon, as I suspect this extraordinary mood is occasioned by the anticipation of his arrival, I am afraid your spirits will carry you half way over the Channel to meet him. Mamma, take my advice, and keep a strict watch over the person of your niece."

"You know, Ellen, you are as full of fun and mischief as I am, quiet and demure as we once thought you," said Lady Emily.

"Is she? I am glad of it," said Mrs. Hamilton, playfully. 'Do not look so very much ashamed of your mirth, my dear Ellen, and bend over your work as if you had been guilty of some extraordinary misdemeanor. You know how pleased I always am to see you happy, Ellen," she added, in a lower voice, as she laid her hand sportively on her niece's head, which was bent down to conceal the confusion Emmeline's words had called forth.

Some little time longer Mrs. Hamilton remained with the young party, entering with her usual kindness into all their pleasures and pursuits, and left them perhaps even happier than she had found them.

Ellen's change of manner had been noticed by the whole party assembled at Oakwood; and by most of them attributed to the anticipation of the long-absent Edward's return. That indefinable manner which had formerly pervaded her whole conduct had disappeared. She no longer seemed to have something weighing on her mind, which Mrs. Hamilton sometimes fancied to have been the case. Cheerful, animated, at times even joyous, she appeared a happier being than she had ever been before; and sincerely her aunt and uncle, who really loved her as their child, rejoiced in the change, though they knew not, guessed not the real cause. Ingratiating herself with all, even the stern Duchess of Rothbury, who, with her now only unmarried daughter, Lady Lucy, had accepted Mrs. Hamilton's pressing invitation to Oakwood, relaxed in her manner towards her; and Sir George Wilmot, also a resident guest, declared that if Edward were not proud of his sister on his return, he would do all in his power to hinder his promotion.

Mr. Hamilton and his family had employed the greater part of a very beautiful August in conducting their guests to all the most picturesque and favorite spots in the vicinity of Oakwood. About a week after the circumstance we have narrated, St. Eval and Lady Gertrude joined them in the morning

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of a proposed excursion, which included the whole party, with the exception of Mrs. Hamilton and Ellen. The Earl and his sister had been instantly enlisted as a most agreeable reinforcement; nor was the young Earl very sorry for an excuse to spend the whole day in enjoying the beauties of Nature *tête-à-tête* with his betrothed, who, since the candid explanation of her agitation on first hearing of Annie's elopement, for which her knowledge of Lord Alphingham's former marriage had well accounted, had become if possible dearer than ever; and this excursion was indeed one of perfect enjoyment to both.

Ellen, for some unaccountable reason which her young friends could neither penetrate nor conceive, refused to accompany them, declaring that most important business kept her at home.

"Edward will not come to-day, so do not expect him," had been Emmeline's parting words.

The ruralizing party were to dine amid the ruins of Berry Pomeroy, and were not expected home till dusk, to a substantial tea.

It might have been seven in the evening that Ellen quietly entered the library, where her aunt was engaged in writing, and stood by her side in silence, as if fearful of interrupting by addressing her.

"Wait a few minutes, my love, and I shall be ready to attend to you, if you require my assistance in the arrangement of your work," Mrs. Hamilton said, alluding to the parcel of baby-linen she perceived in her niece's hand. Ellen smiled and obeyed. In a few minutes Mrs. Hamilton laid aside her writing, and looked up, as if expecting her niece would speak.

"Well, Ellen, what grand difficulty can you not overcome?"

"None, my dear aunt. My task is done; I only want your approval," replied Ellen.

"Done!" repeated her aunt, in an accent of astonishment. "My dear Ellen, it is impossible; I only gave it you a week ago. You must have worked all night to finish it."

"Indeed I have not," replied Ellen, quickly yet earnestly.

"Then I certainly must examine every little article," said Mrs. Hamilton, laughing, "or I shall decidedly fancy this extreme rapidity cannot have been productive of neatness, which last I rather prefer to the first."

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Ellen submitted her work to her scrutiny, without reply and remained kneeling on a stool at her aunt's feet, without any apprehension as to the sentence that would be pronounced.

"Really, Ellen, I shall incline to Emmeline's opinion, and believe some magic is at work within you," was Mrs. Hamilton's observation, as she folded up the tiny suit with very evident marks of satisfaction. "How you have acquired the power of working thus neatly and rapidly, when I have scarcely ever seen a needle in your hand, I cannot comprehend. I will appoint you my seamstress-general, in addition to bestowing my really sincere thanks for the assistance you have afforded me."

Ellen pressed her aunt's hand to her lips in silence, for an enotion Mrs. Hamilton beheld, but could not understand choked her voice.

"What is the matter, love? has any thing occurred to annoy you to-day? You look paler and more sad than usual, tell me what it is."

"Do you remember what—what chanced—have you forgotten the event that took place this very day, this very hour, in this very room, three years ago?" demanded Ellen, almost inaudibly, and her cheek blanched to the color of her robe as she spoke.

"Why recall the painful past at such a moment, my sweet girl? has it not been redeemed by three years of undeviating rectitude and virtue? I had hoped the recollection had ere this long ceased to disturb you," replied Mrs. Hamilton, with much feeling, as she pressed her lips to her niece's brow.

"It never can, it never will, unless—unless—" Strong and almost fearful emotion prevented all she had wished to say, and throwing into Mrs. Hamilton's lap a small calf-skin pocket-book, she flung her arms round her neck, and burying her face in her bosom, murmured, in a voice choked with sobs, "The amount of all I took is there—all—all. Oh, take it, and let me thus feel it as a debt which I have paid."

"Ellen, my own Ellen, be composed," entreated Mrs. Hamilton, alarmed by the extreme agitation she beheld. "Tell me, love, what are the contents of this pocket-book? why do you entreat me so earnestly to take it?"

Struggling violently with herself, Ellen tore open the little book, and placed in her aunt's hand bank notes to the amount of those which had once been so fatal a temptation.

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"They are mine—all mine. I have gained them honestly; indeed, indeed I have; I have worked for them. It was to gain time for this I refused to go out with you last winter. I had hoped my long, long task would have been done before, but it was not. Oh, I thought I should never, never gain the whole amount, but I have now; and, oh, tell me I have in part redeemed my sin; tell me I am more worthy of your love, your kindness; tell me I am again indeed your own happy Ellen."

She would have said more, but no words came at her command, and Mrs. Hamilton remained silent for a few minutes, in surprise and admiration.

"My Ellen, my own much-loved Ellen!" she exclaimed at length, and tears of unfeigned emotion mingled with the repeated kisses she imprinted on her niece's cheek, "this moment has indeed repaid me for all. Little did I imagine in what manner you were employed, the nature of your tedious task. How could you contrive to keep it thus secret from me? what time could you find to work thus laboriously, when not one study or employment have I seen neglected?"

"I thought at first I never should succeed," replied Ellen, her strong emotion greatly calmed; "for while Miss Harcourt remained with us, I had only two hours before prayers in the morning, and sometimes I have ventured to sit up an hour or two later at night; but not often, for I feared you would discover me, and be displeased, for I could not, dared not tell you in what I was employed. The winter before last I earned so much from embroidery and finer kinds of work, that I thought I should have obtained the whole a year ago; but I was disappointed, for here I could only do plain work, at which I earned but little, for I could not do it so quickly. I had hoped there would have been no occasion to refuse your wish, that I should accompany you and Emmeline, but I found the whole amount was still far from complete, and I was compelled to act as I did."

"And is it possible, my Ellen, you have intrusted your secret to no one: have demanded no sympathy, no encouragement in this long and painful task?"

"I could not have accomplished nor did I commence it without the kind assistance and advice of Ellis. My dear aunt, I knew, reposed great confidence in her, and I thought if she did not disapprove of my plan, I should not be acting so very independently, and that with her assistance my secret

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would not be so difficult to keep; she procured me employment. My name nor my reasons for seeking it were never known to those for whom I worked."

"And could she approve of a task such as this, my Ellen? Could she counsel such painful self-denial and tedious labor?"

"She did all she could to dissuade, and at first positively refused to assist me; but at last yielded to my entreaties, for she saw I never should be happy till I could look on the past more as a debt than—than—" She paused, then added—"My own spirit rebelled enough; that was far more difficult to overcome than other dissuasions."

"And what strong impulse could have urged you to this course of self-denial, my sweet girl? I know not yet whether I shall not scold you for this almost needless infliction of pain, and for the deception it involves towards me," said Mrs. Hamilton, with reproachful tenderness.

"Forgive me, oh, forgive me that!" exclaimed Ellen, clasping the hand she held. "I have often and often felt I was deceiving you; failing in that confidence I had promised you should never again have to demand; but I dared not tell you, for I knew you would have prohibited the continuance of my task."

"I should indeed, my Ellen; and tell me why you have done this. Was it indeed because you imagined nothing else could atone for the past?"

"Because I felt—I knew, though I was restored to your favor, your confidence, my conscience was not at peace, because I had read, '*If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that which he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live, he shall not die;*' and I felt, however I might endeavor to be virtuous and good, till I had given again that which I had robbed, I dared not implore the mercy of my God."

It is impossible to do justice by mere description to the plaintive eloquence, to the mournfully expressive voice with which these simple words were said, betraying at once those thoughts and feelings which had been so long concealed in Ellen's meek and youthful heart, the hidden spring from which her every action had emanated; Mrs. Hamilton felt its power, the sentiment was too exalted, too holy for human praise. She folded her niece to her bosom.

"May the Almighty searcher of hearts accept this sacrifice and bless you, my dear child. Secretly, unostentatiously, it

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has been done. Pure must have been the thoughts which were yours when thus employed, when such was their origin, and we may hope, indeed, they have been accepted. Had no self-denial attended the payment of your debt, had you merely entreated your uncle to repay himself from the fortune you possess, I would not have accepted it; such a payment would neither have been acceptable to me, nor to Him whom, I firmly believe, my Ellen sought more to please. But when every action the last few years has proved to me, the words you repeated have indeed been the foundation of this self-conquest, I cannot but humbly, trustingly, think it will be an accepted offering on high. Nor will I refuse to comply with your request, my dearest Ellen; I will receive that which you have so perseveringly and so painfully earned; it shall be employed in purchasing prayers for us all, from those whom it may relieve. Let not the recollection of the past again disturb you, my sweet child. Solicitude and pain you indeed once caused me, but this moment has redeemed it all. Continue thus undeviatingly to follow the blessed path you have chosen, and our Ellen is and ever will be deserving of all the love which those to whom she is so dear can lavish upon her."

For a few minutes there was silence, for the solemnity with which she spoke had touched a responding chord; but the thoughts of the orphan arose to heaven, silently petitioning for grace to continue in that blessed path of which her aunt had spoken, in thankfulness for having been permitted to conclude her painful task, and thus obtain the approbation of her more than mother, the relative she so revered and loved.

"And this, then, was the long task which your numerous avocations during the day prevented your completing, and you therefore took the time from that allotted to recreation and amusement—this, which so strongly emboldened my little Ellen, that even my coldness had no effect, except to make her miserable. What do you not deserve for thus deceiving me? I do not think I know any punishment sufficiently severe." Mrs. Hamilton had recalled all her playfulness, for she wished to banish every trace of sadness and emotion from the countenance of her niece. Ellen raised her head to answer her in her own playful tone, when they were both startled by the declining light of day being suddenly obscured, as if by the shadow of a figure standing by the open window near them. It was, however, so dark, that the outlines of the intruder were alone visible, and they would have been unrecognized by any, save by the eye of affection.

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Ellen sprung suddenly to her feet. "Edward!" burst gladly from her lips, and in another second a fine, manly youth had darted through the open casement, and the long-parted brother and sister were in each other's arms. For a minute only Ellen was pressed in his embrace, and then releasing her, he turned towards his aunt, and even as a devoted mother, a fond and dutiful son, they met, for such had they been in the long years of separation. Frequently had that high-spirited boy been tempted to error and to sin, but as a talisman had her letters been. He thought on the years that were passed, on their last interview, when every word had graven itself upon his heart, on the devotedness of his orphan sister, the misery he had once occasioned; he thought on these things and stood firm,—the tempter fled. He stood before them erect in youthful beauty, no inward stain bade him turn from those fond looks or shrink from the entwining arms of his young sister. And, oh, how blessed is it thus to meet! to feel that vanished years have not estranged us, distance hath not diminished love, that we are to each other even as we parted; to feel again the fond kiss, to hear once more the accents of a voice which to us has been for years so still—a voice that brings with it the gush of memory! Past days flit before us; feelings, thoughts, hopes, we deemed were dead, all rise again, summoned by that secret witchery, the well-remembered though long silent voice. Let years, long, lingering, saddening years drag on their chain, let youth have given place to manhood, manhood to age, still will it be the same—the voice we once have loved, and deemed to us for ever still—oh, time, and grief, and blighted hopes will be forgotten, and youth, in its undimmed and joyous beauty, its glow of generous feelings, its bright anticipations, all, all again be ours.

"Mother; yes, now indeed may I call you mother!" exclaimed Edward, when the agitation of this sudden meeting had subsided, and he found himself seated on a sofa between his aunt and sister, clasping the hand of the former and twining his arm caressingly round the latter. "Now indeed may I indulge in the joy it is to behold you both again; now may I stand forth unshrinkingly to meet my uncle's glance, no guilt, or shame, or fear has cast its mist upon my heart. This was your gift," he drew a small Bible from his bosom. "I read it, first, because it had been yours, because it was dear to you, and then came other and holier thoughts, and I

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bowed down before the God you worshipped, and implored His aid to find strength, and he heard me."

Mrs. Hamilton pressed his hand, but spoke not, and after a brief silence, Edward, changing his tone and his subject, launched at once, with all his natural liveliness, into a hurried tale of his voyage to England. An unusually quick passage gave him and all the youngsters the opportunity they desired, of returning to their various homes quite unexpectedly. The vessel had only arrived off Plymouth the previous night, or rather morning, for it was two o'clock; by noon the ship was dismantled, the crew dismissed, leave of absence being granted to all. And for the first time in his life, he laughingly declared, he fancied being the captain's favorite very annoying, as his presence and assistance were requested at a time when his heart was at Oakwood; however, he was released at last, procured a horse, and galloped away. His disasters were not, however, over; his horse fell lame, as if, Edward said, he felt a seaman was not a fit master for him. He was necessitated to leave the poor animal to the care of a cottager, and proceed on foot, avoiding the village for fear of being recognized before he desired; he exercised his memory by going through the lanes, and reached Oakwood by a private entrance. Astonished at seeing the rooms, by the windows of which he passed, deserted, he began to fear the family were all in London; but the well-known sound of his aunt's voice drew him to the library, just as he was seeking the main entrance to have his doubts solved. He stood for a few minutes gazing on the two beings who, more vividly than any others, had haunted his dreams by night and visions by day; he had wished to meet them first, and alone, and his wish was granted.

Wrapped in her happy feelings, it was her brother's arm around her, her brother's voice she heard, Ellen listened to him in trembling eagerness, scarcely venturing to breathe, lest that dear voice should be still, lest the hand she clasped should fade away, and she should wake and find it but a dream of bliss—Edward could not really have returned; and Mrs. Hamilton felt emotion so powerfully swelling within, as she gazed once more on the brave preserver of her husband, the child of her sister, her very image, that it was with difficulty she could ask those many questions which affection and interest prompted.

Edward had scarcely, however, finished his tale, before the sound of many and eager voices, the joyous laugh, and other signs of youthful hilarity, announced the return of the party

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from their excursion. Nor was it long before Emmeline's voice, as usual, sounded in loud laughing accents for her mother, without whose sympathy no pleasure was complete.

"Do not disturb yourselves yet, my dear children," Mrs. Hamilton said, as she rose, knowing well how many, many things the long-separated orphans must have mutually to tell, and penetrating with that ready sympathy—the offspring of true kindness—their wish for a short time to remain alone together. "You shall not be summoned to join us till tea is quite ready, and if you wish it, Edward," she added, with a smile, "you shall have the pleasure of startling your uncle and cousins as agreeably as you did us. I will control my desire to proclaim the happy tidings of your safe return."

She left the brother and sister together; sending Robert with a lamp, that they might have the gratification of seeing each other, which the increasing darkness had as yet entirely prevented; and a gratification to both it was indeed. Edward had left his sister comparatively well, but with the traces of her severe illness still remaining vividly impressed upon her features; but now he saw her radiant in health, in happiness, and beauty so brilliant, he could hardly recognize that fair and graceful girl for the ailing, drooping child she had once been Nor was the contrast less striking between the Ellen of the present meeting and the Ellen of the last; then wretchedness, misery, inward fever, consumed her outward frame, and left its scorching brand upon her brow. Remorseful anguish had bowed her down; and now he had returned when her heart was free and light as the mountain breeze, her self-inspired penance was completed; and nothing now existed to make her shrink from the delight of devoting hours to her brother.

"Tell James to go over to the Rectory, with my compliments to Mr. Howard, and if he be not particularly engaged, I beg he will join us this evening," said Mrs. Hamilton, a short time after she had left the library, addressing Martyn, then crossing the hall.

"Have you any particular wish for our worthy rector this evening, Emmeline?" demanded Mr. Hamilton, gazing, as he spoke, with admiration and surprise on the countenance of his wife, whose expressive features vainly strove to conceal internal happiness.

"A most earnest desire," she replied, smiling somewhat archly.

"Indeed, I am curious"—

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"I am sorry, dear Arthur, for I am no advocate for curiosity, and cannot indulge it."

"Ah, papa, there is a gentle hint for you, and a broader one for me," exclaimed Emmeline, laughing; while conjectures as to what Mrs. Hamilton's business with the rector could possibly be, employed the time merrily till the whole party were assembled.

"You may depend, Emmeline, it is to arrange all the necessary minutiæ for your marriage," said Lord St. Eval, who had been persuaded to remain at Oakwood that night. "Your mother has selected a husband for you; and, fearing your opposition, has sent for Mr. Howard that all may be said and done at once."

"I hope, then, that I am the man," exclaimed Lord Louis, laughing; "there is no one else whom she can very well have at heart, not that I see," he added, looking mischievously round him, while some strange and painful emotions suddenly checked Emmeline's flow of spirits, and utterly prevented her replying.

A flush of crimson dyed her cheek and brow; nay, her fair neck partook its hue, and she suddenly turned towards her mother, with a glance that seemed of entreaty.

"Why, Emmeline, my dear child, you surely cannot believe there is the least particle of truth in my mischievous son's assertion," said the Marchioness of Malvern, pitying, though she wondered at her very evident distress.

"And is marriage so very disagreeable to you even in thought?" demanded Lord St. Eval, still provokingly.

"The very idea is dreadful; I love my liberty too well," answered Emmeline, hastily rallying her energies with an effort, and she ran on in her usual careless style; but her eye glanced on the tall figure of young Myrvin, as he stood with Herbert at a distant window, and words and liveliness again for a moment failed. His arms were folded on his bosom, and his grey eye rested on her with an expression almost of despair, for the careless words of Lord Louis had reached his heart—"No one else she can have."

Lord Louis had forgotten him, or intentionally reminded him that he was indeed as a cipher in that noble circle; that he might not, dared not aspire to that fair hand. He gazed on her, and she met his look; and if that earnest, almost agonized glance betrayed to her young and guileless bosom that she was beloved, it was not the only secret she that night discovered.

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Mr. Hamilton was too earnestly engaged in conversation with Sir George Wilmot to notice the painful confusion of his child; and Mrs. Hamilton was thinking too deeply and happily on Ellen's conduct and Edward's return, to bestow the attention that it merited, and consequently it passed without remark.

"Mother, I am sorry to be the first to inform you of such a domestic misfortune," said Percy, soon after entering the room, apparently much amused, "but Robert has suddenly lost his wits; either something extraordinary has happened, or is about to happen, or the poor fellow has become bewitched. You smile, mother; on my honor, I think it no smiling matter."

"Never mind, Percy; your favorite attendant will, I have no doubt, recover his senses before the night is over. I am not in the least anxious," replied his mother, smiling.

"Percy, your mother has clothed herself to-night in im penetrable mystery, so do not hope to discover any thing through her," said Lord St. Eval, laughing, and the young men continued gayly conversing with Lady Gertrude and Caroline, till the entrance of Mr. Howard and the announcement of tea or supper; of both of which, after a day spent in the country as this had been, the evening meal partook.

"Ellen—where is Ellen?" said several voices, as they seated themselves round the hospitable board, and observed her place was vacant; and Sir George Wilmot eagerly joined the inquiry.

"She will join us shortly, Sir George," replied Mrs. Hamilton, and, turning to a servant near her, desired him to let Miss Fortescue know tea was ready.

"I will go, madam. Stand back, James, let me pass," exclaimed Robert, hastily, and he bounded out of the apartment with a most extraordinary failing of his wonted respect.

"There, proof positive; did I not tell you the lad was mad," said Percy, and, as if in confirmation of his words, almost directly after a loud and joyful shout sounded from the servants' hall.

Mr. Hamilton looked up inquiringly, and in doing so, his eye caught an object that caused him to start from his seat with an exclamation of surprise and pleasure; while Percy, leaping over chairs and tables that stood in his way, unheeding Lord Louis's inquiry, whether Robert had infected him, shook and shook again the hand of the long-absent relative,

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in whom both he and Herbert could only recognize the preserver of their father. Herbert and his sisters simultaneously left their seats and crowded round him. Warmly, affectionately, Edward greeted them one and all, and rapidly answered the innumerable questions of Percy; defended his sister from all share in his concealment, of which Herbert and Emmeline laughingly accused her. The flush of almost painful bashfulness still lingered on his cheek, as he marked the eyes of all fixed upon him, strangers as well as friends; but as he turned in the direction of his aunt, and his eye fell on the venerable figure of his revered preceptor, who stood aside, enjoying the little scene he beheld, as the remembrance of the blessed words, the soothing comfort that impressive voice had spoken in his hour of greatest need, the lessons of his childhood, his dawning youth, rushed on his mind, control, hesitation, reserve, were all at an end; he broke from the surrounding and eager group, even from the detaining arm of his sister, sprung towards him, and clasping both Mr. Howard's hands, his eyes glistened and his voice quivered as he exclaimed—

"Mr. Howard, too! one of my first, my best, and kindest friends. Ellen told me not of this unexpected pleasure; this is joy, indeed."

"A joy to me, too, my dear boy, equally unexpected; we must thank Mrs. Hamilton for this early meeting. I knew not the pleasure she had prepared for me," replied Mr. Howard, returning the pressure of Edward's hand with equal warmth.

"Nor did any one, my good sir. Never will I say again a lady cannot keep a secret," said the Marquis of Malvern, jestingly. "Mr. Hamilton, as you do not seem inclined to honor me, without asking, I must entreat a formal introduction to that gallant nephew of yours, whose name is not unknown to naval fame, though as yet but one of her junior officers."

"I really beg your pardon, my dear Lord; Edward's sudden appearance has startled me out of all etiquette. To one and all, then, of my good friends here, allow me to introduce to their indulgent notice this said Edward Fortesque, midshipman and gallant officer on board His Majesty's good ship Prince William; and, in order that all reserve may be at an end between us, I propose a bumper to the health and prosperity of the wanderer returned."

"Most excellent, my dear father; one that I will second with all my heart," exclaimed Percy, eagerly. "For that am-

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phibious animal looks marvellously like a fish out of water amongst us all; and here we admit no strangers. Edward, there is a vacant seat reserved for you by my mother's side, who looks much as if she would choose you for her knight this evening; and, therefore, though your place in future is amongst the young ladies, to whom by and by I mean to introduce you by name and character, we will permit you to sit there to-night. Ellen, my little coz, where are you? You must be content with looking at your brother, not sitting by him. I cannot allow such breaches of etiquette; that is quite impossible."

"I am perfectly satisfied where I am, Percy," replied his cousin, laughing, as she obeyed the Marchioness of Malvern's request, and seated herself beside her. Every eye was turned on Ellen with an admiration, which, had not her thoughts been engrossed with her brother, would have been actually painful to one of her quick feelings. Lady Malvern longed to hear from her young favorite, in words, the internal delight which was so evident in every feature, and, by her kindly sympathy, succeeded in her wishes. The young sailor's health was celebrated with enthusiasm; and Edward, gracefully, though briefly, returned his thanks, while the kindness of all around him, the easy friendliness of those who were strangers, and the joy of feeling himself once more in the midst of those he loved, soon placed him perfectly at ease.

Ellen looked eagerly round her circle of friends, to mark the impression made by Edward, and even her fond affection was fully satisfied. Sir George Wilmot had not spoken, but his eye kindled with animation as in the gallant young sailor he recalled his own youthful days, while some other sad remembrances kept him silent, and checked his usual hilarity. Lord Malvern appeared almost as interested as Mr. Hamilton. Lady Gertrude's kind glance met hers, and told, by its silent eloquence, how well she sympathized in Ellen's feelings; and Lord St. Eval, too, his smile spoke volumes, though his natural reserve prevented his addressing Edward, while the young and lively members of the party seemed to find abundant amusement in the anecdotes and adventures he narrated. Arthur Myrvin gazed earnestly at him, and for a time banished his own distressing thoughts in the endeavor to trace in the fine manly youth before him some likeness to the handsome, yet violent and mischievous boy he had first and last seen in the village of Llangwillan.

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"I have heard so much of Edward, from my friend Ellen here, that I am most anxious to cultivate his acquaintance, and trust Castle Malvern will often be graced by the presence of such a gallant young sailor," was the Marchioness of Malvern's kind address, after they had adjourned to the drawing-room, as, leaning on the arm of Ellen, she advanced to the young man, who, from Percy's lively introduction, was playing the agreeable to Lady Florence and Lady Emily Lyle, while Lord Louis, who found something in Edward's countenance that promised a kindred feeling for fun and frolic, was demanding question after question, which Edward was answering in a manner calculated to excite the continued merriment of his companions, till a sign from his aunt called him to her side.

"So I must entreat Admiral Sir George Wilmot to deign to notice my nephew, it will not be given unasked," she said, approaching the aged officer, who was sitting a little apart, shading his eyes with his hand, as if in deep thought. "Sir George, I shall impeach you of high treason against me, the liege lady of this fortress, that on a night when all is joy, you, who are generally the gayest, should be sad. What excuse can you urge in your defence?"

"Is Edward unworthy of the high privilege of being a sailor, Sir George?" whispered Ellen, archly, "or is your wrath against me, for not joining your expedition this morning, to be extended to him? will you not look on him as a brother seaman?"

"Nay, Ellen, I must toil through long years of servitude, I must reap very many laurels, ere I can deserve that title," said Edward. "The name of Sir George Wilmot is too well known on the broad seas for me to hope for more than a word of encouragement from him, or to enable me to look on him with any other feelings than those of the deepest reverence and respect."

"Ay, ay, young man, you wish to surprise the old hulk to surrender; gayly rigged and manned as you are, you think, by a show of homage to me, to surprise me into paying it to you," said the old man, rousing himself from his abstraction, and laughing as he spoke. "Do not deny it, youngster, but I forgive you; for I have been an old fool, Mrs. Hamilton. I plead guilty, and throw myself on your mercy. You, Mistress Ellen, you deserve nothing from me, after rejecting every courtly speech I could think of this morning, to persuade you to crowd sail and steer out under my guidance, instead of re-

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maining safe in harbor. Jokes apart, if you, young sir, will feel pleasure in the friendship of an old time-worn servant of his Majesty as I am, I offer you my hand with all the warmth and sincerity of our noble profession. For your uncle's sake as well as your own, my best wishes and my best offices shall be exercised in tacking on lieutenant to your name."

"And you will do nothing, then, for *my sake*, Sir George, nor for my aunt's, whose dignity your sadness has offended?" said Ellen, smiling, as did Mrs. Hamilton.

"Your aunt would forgive my sadness, my dear child, did she know its cause. I was wrong to encourage it, but I could not look on these bright features," he laid his hand, which trembled, on Edward's arm, "without seeing again past times, peopled with those who have passed away. Mrs. Hamilton, I thought again the merry favorite of my old friend, your father, stood before me, the gay, the thoughtless, lovely Eleanor; she was like him, in the bloom of youth and freshness, when I last beheld her; and I thought, as mine eye glanced on this well-known uniform, there was another still of whom he reminded me,—the adopted son of my affections, the darling of my childless years, Charles, my gallant warm-hearted Charles! Nearly six years was he with me, when his courage earned him a lieutenant's berth; he changed his quarters and his commander, and I saw him no more. Such was he; such—oh, I thought Eleanor and Charles again were before me, and I longed for the friend of my early years, to recognize in his grandson the features of his Eleanor, the voice, the laugh, and figure of his Charles. Forgive me, my dear children, I have frightened away your mirth, and made myself gloomy."

There was silence as he ceased, and Sir George was the first to break it, by addressing Edward with animation, questioning him as to all his nopes and anticipations with regard to his promotion, which, as his six years of service were now passed, he allowed to occupy his mind, and in such conversation all traces of gloom quickly vanished; and Ellen, interested in their conference, lingered near them in recovered spirits, till the bell summoned all those who chose to join in the evening prayer. All attended, except young Myrvin, who had departed. Herbert felt anxious on his friend's account, for many reasons, which we must postpone explaining till a future page; suffice it now to say that the young man's conduct not seeming to be such as his profession demanded, a degree of scarcely perceptible, but keenly-felt coldness was displayed

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towards him, both by Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Howard. Herbert had this night remarked that his cheek was pale, his eye almost haggard, and his words and manner often confused, and he had endeavored to elicit the cause of his inward disturbance, but unsuccessfully; the young man, although very evidently unhappy, appeared to shrink from his confidence, and Herbert, though grieved, desisted from his friendly office. That night Mr. Hamilton resigned his place at the reading-desk to the worthy minister, who, both in public and private worship, knew so well the duties of his sacred office. He read the chapters of the evening, with a brief but explanatory commentary on each, and after the usual prayers, broke forth into a strain of earnest thanksgiving for the safe return of him who, since he had last addressed his God, surrounded by his family, had been exposed to the temptations and dangers of the sea, and mercifully preserved through them all, and permitted to return in joy and peace. To all, save to the orphans and Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, his words applied but to the terrors of the deep, but they well knew where the thoughts of their minister had wandered; they knew that fervent thanksgiving was offered up for his preservation from those sins which had been his on his last return; they knew he blessed his Maker for the promise of virtue he beheld; His grace had enabled him to overcome temptation, and return to the home of his boyhood comparatively unstained.

Edward contrasted his present feelings with those which he had experienced the first night of his last return, and Ellen thought on that bitter anguish, the public shame which had been hers in that very hall, that very night three years before, and the young hearts of both the orphans were filled with warm and deep thanksgiving. The thoughts of all were composed and tranquillized when Mr. Howard ceased, and in the little time that intervened between the conclusion of the service and the family separating to their rooms, no light and frivolous converse disturbed the solemn but not sad impression on the minds of each.

"I cannot part from you for the night, my dear cousin," said Edward, somewhat archly, though in a low voice, as he approached the spot where Caroline and St. Eval stood, "without offering you my warmest congratulations on your future prospects, and without requesting an introduction from *you* to him, in whom I am to welcome a new relative. I have been wishing to do so all the evening, but when I was at liberty I missed you."

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Evidently pleased, Caroline looked up into St. Eval's face, but before she could speak, the young Earl had warmly pressed Edward's hand, and answered with sincerity and kindness equal to his own. The whole party very soon afterwards dispersed.

Were it ours to follow our young and still, in appearance, childlike friend Emmeline Hamilton to her room that night, we should see that the smiles which had beamed around her lip had passed away, the flush on her cheek was no longer there, and one or two bright drops might have been observed slowly falling on her pale cheek, as she sat in deep musing, ere she retired to her couch. She had dismissed Fanny, alleging that she did not require her aid, and her long silky hair, loosed from its confinement, hung carelessly in golden waves around her. Tears fell on her hand; she started, and flung back her tresses, looked fearfully around her, and passed her hand across her eyes, as if to check them—but ineffectually; another and another fell; she leaned her crossed arms upon the pillow, and her head drooped on them, and she wept, wept as she had never wept before, and yet she knew not wherefore; she was sad, how deeply sad, but that young and guileless spirit knew not why. Child she was still in looks, in playfulness, in glee; a child she still believed herself, but she was no child—that age of buoyancy had fled, and Emmeline was, indeed, a woman, a thinking, feeling, ay, and loving woman.

It might have been nearly a week after Edward's return, when, on entering the library one morning, Mrs. Hamilton observed her husband, Mr. Howard, and Edward, in earnest conference, the latter appearing somewhat agitated. She would have retreated, imagining her presence mistimed, but Edward, the instant he perceived her, sprung forward, and seizing both her hands, exclaimed, in a voice of entreaty—

"Dearest aunt, will not you use your influence with my uncle, and prevail on him to take the sum I have saved at different times, from my prize-money and other things, to replace that which—which was lost three years ago? To obtain sufficient, I have denied myself all unnecessary indulgence; it has checked my natural extravagance; prevented me, when sometimes I have been strongly tempted to play, or join my messmates in questionable amusements. In saving that, I have cured myself of many faults; it has taught me economy and control, for, by the time the whole amount was saved my wishes and evil inclinations were conquered. I look on it as a debt which

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I had bound myself to pay. I anticipated the pleasure of telling my dear sister, she might banish the past entirely from her mind, for I would not write a word of my intentions, lest I should fail in them ere I returned. And now my uncle refuses to grant my request; Mr. Howard will not second me; and—and I see how it is," he continued, with a return of former violence in his manner, as he paced the room, and a flush burned on his cheek, "my uncle will not consent to look on it as a debt; he will not permit me, even as far as this will do it, to redeem my sister."

"You are quite mistaken, my dear boy," replied Mr. Hamilton, mildly. "Your sister's own conduct has sufficiently proved to me her repentance and amendment; her gentle virtues and faultless conduct have quite redeemed the past, and so has yours. I refuse to take your well-earned savings, merely because they really are not necessary."

"But if it will give me pleasure, if it will satisfy me. Dearest aunt, plead for me; you know not the relief it will be," again entreated Edward, as he paused, in his hasty walk, and looked beseechingly in his aunt's face.

"Nay, dear Edward, do not demand impossibilities," she replied, smiling, "I cannot plead for you. That money with which you appear so very eager to part, must return to your own purse; your sister's debt is already paid."

"Paid!" repeated Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Howard, in astonishment, while Edward stood as if bewildered. "How, and by whom?"

"By Ellen herself," replied Mrs. Hamilton; and addressing her husband, she added, "I should have told you before, but we have both been too much engaged the last two days to allow any time for private conversation; and my Ellen had entreated that only you should know her secret; but she would, I know, have made an exception in Mr. Howard's favor had I demanded it, for his excellent lessons have in all probability assisted in making her the character she is; and as for her brother—why, in charity, he shall know this strange tale," she added, smiling; and briefly, but with affecting accuracy, she related all that had passed between her and Ellen on the evening of Edward's return. Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Howard listened in astonishment, for they knew not the quiet steadiness, the unwavering firmness of Ellen's private character; they guessed not the deep remorse which had been her own, nor for how long it had guided and purified her actions. Edward

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had concealed his face in his hands, his arms resting upon the table, for he felt in this tale of persevering effort and self-denial, in comparison with Ellen's, as if his had sunk to nothing; the bright lustre of his sister's character had dimmed even to obscurity his own.

"And have you questioned Ellis? do you know in what manner she contrived so secretly to render her assistance?" demanded Mr. Hamilton, with much interest.

"I have," replied his wife. "I did so that same night; for even Edward's unexpected return could not banish his sister from my mind. She told me, that at first she did all she could to turn Ellen from her purpose; but when she found her resolution was unalterably fixed by some means to earn sufficient to repay the cause of so much distress, she entered warmly into her plan; and, with the active assistance of Robert, procured her work from the baby-linen warehouses at Plymouth. She first began with the plainest work, but that succeeded so well, finer was given to her. In London she worked embroidery, purchasing the materials from her own pocket-money, and consequently largely increasing her hoard. Spite of her ill health, the first winter we spent in London, she perseveringly continued her irksome task, rising even in the coldest weather at six, the provident care of Ellis causing her fire to be lighted almost the earliest in the house. Robert was the messenger employed to and fro, but no one knew her name or rank; for, devoted as we well know he is to Ellen, he took the trouble of changing his livery for plain clothes, whenever Ellis sent him on his mission. Her secret has, indeed, been well preserved both from us and those who employed her. Many, very many silent tears Ellis believes have fallen over my poor Ellen's tedious task; many a struggle to adhere to her resolution, and not throw it aside in despair; and frequently, she told me, after a long, solitary evening, she has thrown her arms around Ellis's neck, and wept from exhaustion, and the misery of hope deferred, for at first it did appear an endless labor; but she persevered unshrinkingly, combating her wishes to accompany me wherever Emmeline visited.

"And it was this, then, that caused her determination to remain at home till next year," observed Mr. Hamilton; "poor child, our harshness was no sweetener of her task."

"It was not, indeed; the night of Emmeline's introduction, Ellis says, she wept as if her heart would break, as if she could not keep her secret any longer; but she struggled with her

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self, and conquored; although many times, during my estrangement, she has longed to confess all, but the fear that I should forbid her continuing her task restrained her."

"I am very glad she persevered in her secret," said Mr. Howard, warmly; "it is this quiet steady perseverance in a painful duty that has pleased me far more than even the action itself, guided as that was by every proper feeling. Extraordinary sacrifices of our own formation are not, in general, as acceptable to Him for whose sake they are ostentatiously made, as the quiet steady discharge of our destined duties—the one is apt to beget pride, the other true humility; but this unshaken resolution in one so young, had its origin from true repentance, and aided as it has been by the active fulfilment of every duty, strengthened as it has, no doubt, been by prayer, I cannot but trust her heavenly Master will look down with an eye of mercy on His young servant. Look up, Edward; you, too, have done your duty. Why should your sister's conduct cause this sudden depression, my young friend?"

"Because," exclaimed he, with an earnestness almost startling, and as he looked up, his eyes glistened with tears, "because all my efforts sink to nothing beside hers. I deemed myself becoming worthy; that the conquests over inclination I made would obliterate the past; but what are my sacrifices compared to hers? Weak, frail, sensitive creature as she is, thus secretly, laboriously to earn that sum which, because it required one or two petty sacrifices of inclination, I deemed that I had so nobly gained. What have been my efforts compared to hers?"

"Almost as great to you, my dear boy, as hers were to her," said Mr. Hamilton, kindly; "you, too, have done well. Your past errors have already, in my mind, and in that of Mr. Howard and your aunt's, been obliterated by the pleasure your conduct has bestowed. She has not had the temptations to extravagant pleasure which have been yours; to save this sum you must have resigned much gratification. You have acted thus excellently, in part, to regain the good opinion of your friends, and the kind wish of restoring perfect peace to your sister: in the first, you have fully succeeded; in the second, when your sister knows what has been the secret purpose of your life for three long years, her affections will amply repay you. You are deserving of each other, my dear Edward; and this moment I do not scruple to say, I am proud to feel myself so nearly related to those who, young as they both are, have

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so nobly and perseveringly performed their duty both to God and man."

Young Fortescue raised his uncle's hand, wrung it between both his own, and impetuously darted from the room.

"That boy would teach me never to despair again, my good friend," said Mr. Hamilton, addressing the worthy clergyman. "When last he left me I had learned to hope and yet to fear, for I dreaded his exposure to his former temptations; and now—glad, indeed, am I to acknowledge myself vanquished, and to own you were ever in the right."

Mr. Howard smiled.

"And now does my husband regret his having adopted my sister's orphan as his own?" demanded Mrs. Hamilton, entwining her arm in her husband's, and looking caressingly in his face.

"No, my dearest wife; once, indeed, when I beheld you in fancy about to sink beneath the accumulation of misery and anxiety both Edward and Ellen's conduct occasioned, I did in secret murmur that the will of my heavenly Father had consigned to us the care of such misguided ones; I fear I looked on them as the disturbers of family peace and harmony, when it was the will of my God. I felt indignant and provoked with them, when I should have bowed submissively to Him. I have been blessed in them when I deserved it not. You ever trusted, my Emmeline, though far greater distress was your lot than mine. You never repented of that kindness which bade your heart bleed for their orphan state, and urged you to take them to your gentle bosom, and soothe them as your own. I know that at this moment you have your reward."

Mrs. Hamilton was prevented from replying by the entrance of Edward, who eagerly inquired for his sister, alleging he had searched every room in the house and could not find her.

"She has gone with Herbert to the village, to take the fruits of her own work, some baby linen, to the poor woman in whose fate I am so interested," replied Mrs. Hamilton, and turning to her husband, added—"Now we really are alone, my dear Arthur, will you give a little of your time to inform me in what manner I can best lay out, for this unfortunate being's advantage, the sum my Ellen has placed in my hands? Do not look at me, Edward, as if to implore me to take yours also, for I mean to be very positive, and say at once I will not."

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"Come with me, my young friend, and we will go and meet Herbert and Ellen," Mr. Howard said, smiling; "a walk is the best remedy for nerves fevered as yours are at present, and I should be glad of your company." And Edward, with eager pleasure, banishing all traces of former agitation, departed, arm in arm with a companion whom he still so revered and loved, recalling with him reminiscences of his boyhood, and detailing with animation many incidents of his late trip. This walk, quiet as it was, was productive, both to Mr. Howard and his pupil, of extreme pleasure; the former, while he retained all the gravity and dignity of his holy profession, knew well how to sympathize with youth. Increased duties in the ministry had caused him to resign the school which he had kept when we first knew him, to the extreme regret of both master and pupils. Mr. Howard regarded young people as the tender lambs of his fold, whom it was his especial charge to train up in the paths of grace, and guard from all the dangerous and hidden pitfalls of sin; their parents might neglect, or, ignorant themselves, pursue a mistaken method, but he was the shepherd placed over the flock, and while untiringly, zealously, he endeavored to lead the older members of his congregation to the only rock of salvation, the younger were the object of his especial care. To them all was bright, the world in its dangerous, because more pleasurable, labyrinths was before them. He saw, he knew their perfect ignorance, and he trembled, while he prayed so to lead them, that the lessons of their minister might check them in the career of imprudence or of sin.

"Were I one of the fathers of Rome, I should say, *benedicite*, my children," he said, playfully, as Herbert and Ellen, apparently in serious yet happy conversation approached and joined them, "but as I am merely a simple minister of a simple faith, I greet you with the assurance you are blessed in your charitable office."

"And how, my kind friend, could you discover such was our employment?" replied Herbert, smiling. "Can my mother have been betraying us?"

"Oh, she has been a sad traitress this morning, betraying all kinds of secrets and misdemeanors," said Mr. Howard, laughing, and casting on Ellen a glance of arch meaning, while Edward could scarcely contain his impatience to seize his sister's arm and bear her off with him.

"And we, too, have been hearing many tales of you, Mr

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Howard," she said. "We have heard very many blessings on your name in the cottage we have left, although, alas! events have occurred there of a very painful nature."

"And why, alas, my dear child?" said Mr. Howard, affectionately. "Do you deem it so sad a thing to die?"

"It is wrong, I know, to regard it thus, Mr. Howard," replied Ellen; "but yet, to leave all those we love on earth, to sever the tender chords of affection binding us unto this world, must be, even to the strongest and most pious minds, a draught of bitterness."

"Do not, my dear children," said Mr. Howard, "imagine I deem it wrong to indulge in earthly affections. Far from it; they are given us to sweeten life, to draw our hearts in thanksgiving to Him who gave them, and thus indulged are pleasing unto Him. And how did you find poor Nanny to-day?" he added, after a brief pause.

"Suffering very much in body, but in a blessed state of mind," replied Ellen, "which she greatly attributed to you; for she told me, before my aunt discovered them and placed them where they now are, before she saw you, death was a trouble awful in anticipation. She had ever tried to do her duty in life, to remember her Maker in her youth, and believed that she had succeeded; but when she knew that she must die, all appeared changed; the aspect of death was different when seemingly at a distance, to that which it presented when near at hand. She longed for some minister of the Lord to pray for her, to comfort her in those moments when suffering prevented serious thoughts, and it was affecting to hear her bless that charity which had not only placed her soul under your guidance, but provided also so many bodily comforts."

"And you have been exercising the duties of the ministry before you have donned your gown, my dear Herbert," said Mr. Howard, glancing approvingly on his young friend. "Glad indeed shall I be to hail you as a young brother in my sacred office; for with you it will be indeed the service of the heart, and not of interest or compulsion. Would that your friend Arthur possessed one-half of your earnest zeal, or that you could inspire him with the same love for his sacred calling which animates you."

"I know not what to make of Arthur," said Herbert, somewhat sadly; "he is strangely, unaccountably changed the last few months. When he was first settled in his curacy, his conduct was such as to excite the approbation of both my father

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and yourself; and now, I greatly fear, that he is alienating both."

"Do not condemn him harshly, without good proof, dear Mr. Howard," said Ellen, earnestly. "I, too, have noticed that he is changed, though I scarcely know in what manner; but for his father's sake and for mine, do not treat him coldly before my uncle at least. He has many faults, but surely some good qualities."

"I trust he has; but I wish he would not so carefully conceal them, and suffer his parishioners to have cause to relate so many tales of neglect and levity in their curate," replied Mr. Howard; "but we will not bring forward accusations when the accused is not present to defend himself: and here we are at the Rectory before I thought we were half way. Will you come in, my young friends, and share an old man's homely luncheon?"

Gladly would they have done so, but Ellen had promised to return to Oakwood in time for that meal, and was compelled to refuse; adding, that both her brother and cousin might, for the Rectory was so near one of the entrances to the park, she could easily return alone; but such was not Mr. Howard's intention. He knew how Edward longed for a few minutes' private conversation with his sister, and playfully detaining Herbert, declaring he could not do without one at least, dismissed the orphans on their walk, bestowing his parting blessing on Ellen with a warmth that surprised her at the time, but the meaning of which was fully explained in the interesting conversation that passed between her and her brother ere they reached the house, and as the expression of approbation in the minister she loved, filled her young mind with joy, while the mutual confidence bestowed in that walk added another bright link to the chain of affection which bound the souls of that brother and sister so fondly together.

CHAPTER XIII.

It was the hour when all in general retired to rest, and the inmates of Oakwood had dispersed for the purpose; but this night thoughts of a mingled and contending nature occupied Mrs. Hamilton's mind, and prevented all wish for sleep. Her guests had the last week increased, and the part of hostess had been kindly and pleasingly performed; but the whole of that

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day she had longed to be alone, and gladly, gratefully she hailed that hour which enabled her to be so. Shading her eyes with her hand, she gave to her thoughts the dominion they demanded. Maternal ambition, maternal pride, in that silent hour fell before the stronger, more absorbing power of maternal love. But a few brief hours, and the child of her anxious cares, of fervent petitions at the throne of grace, would be no longer an inmate of her father's house, her place in that happy home would be a void. On the morrow, ay, the morrow, for the intervening weeks had fled, her child would be another's. True, but few miles would separate their homes; true, that he on whom that precious gift would be bestowed, was in all respects the husband she would have selected for her Caroline, the husband for whom the involuntary prayer had arisen; virtue and piety, manliness and sincerity were his; besides these attributes, which to some mothers would have been far more brilliant, he was noble, even of exalted rank; but all, all these things were forgotten in the recollection, that on the morrow she must bid farewell to her cherished treasure, the link, the precious link of protection would be severed, and for ever. Thoughts of the past mingled with the present, and softened yet more that fond mother's feelings. Pain, bitter pain, Caroline had sometimes cost her, but pleasure, exquisite in its kind, had mingled with it. No longer would it be hers to watch with trembling joy the dawning virtues which had flourished beneath her eye; a link would be broken between them, a slender one indeed, but still broken—though Mrs. Hamilton reproached herself for indulging in such feelings of sadness, when so many blessings promised to gild the lot of her child. And yet, alas! what mother devoted to her children as she had been, as still was this noble and gentle woman, could part from a beloved one, even for a brief space, ever for happiness, without one pang, selfish as it might be, selfish as perhaps it was? for anxiety for the future darkened not the prospects of earthly bliss, her trust in the character of St. Eval was too confiding; it was only *her* fond heart which for a time, would be so desolate. Her ear would linger in vain for the voice it loved; her eye seek in sorrow for the graceful form, the beauteous features on which it had so loved to gaze. New ties would supply to Caroline the place of all that she had left; deep springs of fond emotions, such as she had never felt before, would open in her heart, and then would she still love, would she still look to that mother, as in childhood and

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in youth she had done? Vainly she struggled to subdue these thoughts, and bring forward in their stead the visions of happiness, which alone had visited her before. Thronging and tumultuously they came, and tears stole slowly from those mild eyes, which for herself so seldom wept; while engrossed in her own reflections, she heard not the soft and careful opening of her door, she knew not that the beloved object of those tears had entered her room, and was kneeling beside her.

"Mother!" murmured Caroline, in a voice tremulous and weak with emotion equal to her own. Mrs. Hamilton started and her lip quivered with the effort she made to smile her greeting. "Mother, my own mother, forgive my intrusion; I thought not to have found you thus. Oh, deem me not failing in that deep reverence your goodness, your devotedness, have taught me to feel for you; if my love would bid me ask you why you weep, may I not share your sorrow, mother?"

"These are but selfish tears, my own; selfish, for they fall only when I think that to-morrow bears my Caroline away, and leaves her mother's heart for a time so lone and sad, that it will not even think of the happiness I so fondly trust will be hers, in becoming the bride of him she loves. Forgive me, my own Caroline; I had no right to weep and call for these dear signs of sympathy at such a time."

Silently and tearfully Caroline clung to her mother, and repeatedly pressed her hand to her lips.

"And why are you not at rest, my child? you will have but few brief hours for sleep, scarcely sufficient to recall the truant rose to these pale cheeks, and the lustre to this suddenly dimmed eye, my Caroline;" and the mother passed her hand caressingly over her brow, and parted the luxuriant hair that, loosened from the confining wreath of wild flowers which had so lately adorned it, hung carelessly around her. She looked long and wistfully on that young bright face.

"You ask me why I am not at rest; oh, I could not, I felt I could not part from you, without imploring your forgiveness for all the past; without feeling that it was indeed pardoned. Never, never before has my conduct appeared in such true colors; dark, even to blackness, when contrasted with yours. Your blessing is my own, it will be mine to-morrow; but, oh, it will not be hallowed to my heart, did I not confess that I was—that I am unworthy of all your fondness, mother, and implore you to forgive the pain I have so often and so wantonly inflicted upon you. Oh, you know not how bitterly, how

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reproachfully, my faults and errors rushed back to my mind, as I sat and thought this was the last night that Caroline Hamilton would sleep beneath this roof; that to-morrow we parted, and I left you without once acknowledging I deserved not half your goodness; without one effort to express the devoted gratitude, the deep, the reverential love, with which my heart is filled. Mother, dearest, dearest mother! oh, call me but your blessing, your comfort,—I never have been thus; wilful and disobedient, I have poisoned many hours which would otherwise have been sweet. Mother, my own mother, say only you forgive me—say that no lingering pang on my account remains."

"Forgive you, my beloved! oh, long, long since have every childish fault and youthful error been forgiven. Could resentment harbor in my heart so long? could memory linger on moments of pain, when this last year not one fault, not one failing of duty or of love has stained your conduct? Even as my other children have you been my blessing, my comfort; the dearer, when I thought on the doubts and fears of the past. Pain you may have once caused me; but, oh, you know not how blessedly one proof of affection, one hour of devotion in a child can obliterate from a mother's heart the remembrance of months of pain. Think no more of what is past, my own; remember only that your mother's blessing, her fervent prayers will hover round you wherever you may be; that, should sickness and sorrow at any time be your portion, however distant we may be, your mother will come to soothe and cheer, your mother's bosom will still be open to receive you."

Caroline answered not, for her tears fell fast upon the hand she held; tears, not of sorrow but of emotion, blessed in their sadness. She bowed her head before Mrs. Hamilton, and murmured—

"Bless me, my mother!"

"May the God of infinite love, the Father of unclouded mercies, who hath been so unchangeably merciful to his servant, look down from His resplendent throne, and bless you, my beloved! May he sanctify and bless that event, which promises to our darkened eyes so much felicity! May He guide my child in His own paths, and hearken to her mother's prayer!"

"We will not separate this night to pray each in solitude, my child; let us read, and address our heavenly Father together, as we were wont to do, when it was my task to raise

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your infant thoughts and simple prayers to Him who heard and answered. I cannot part from you till these agitated feelings are more composed, and prayer will best enable them to be so."

Willingly, gladly Caroline lingered, and their private devotions, which ever attended their retiring to rest, were performed together. Their blessed influence was mutually felt. He whom they so fervently addressed looked down upon His good and faithful servants, and poured upon the mother's soul and on that of her child the calm and tranquillizing dew of His blessing.

The morning dawned, and commonplace as is the expression, yet we must confess the day was lovely; one of those soft, delicious September days so well known to all who are acquainted with the climate of Devonshire. Gayly the sun looked down from his field of stainless azure, and peeped through the windows of the elegant little room which the taste of her young bridemaids had decorated as Caroline's tiring-room for the day, and his bright rays played on the rich jewels scattered on the toilette, and decked them with renewed brilliance; and at times his light would fall full upon the countenance of the young bride, sometimes pensive, at others, radiant in beaming smiles, as she replied to the kind words of Lady Gertrude, or in answer to the playful conversation of her younger bridemaids, who, full of life, and hope, and innocence, hovered like fairy spirits round their Queen. The tears which had fallen from the eyes of Emmeline on her sister's neck that morning were dried, yet still there were some lingering traces of sadness on her fair sweet face, which she struggled vainly to conceal, but which were regarded as the sorrow of an affectionate heart thus parting from the sister of its love.

And Lilla Grahame, too, was there, smiling with real and heartfelt pleasure. She had observed the slight cloud on Emmeline's brow, and with every affectionate art endeavored to remove it.

The toilette of the bride was completed, save her jewels, which Ellen had entreated might be her office to arrange, and, smilingly, Lady Florence resigned her place by Caroline's side.

"For Edward's sake and for mine, dearest Caroline, will you, decked as you are with jewels so far more precious, yet will you wear this, and regard it indeed as the offering of the sincerest affection for yourself, the warmest prayers for your

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welfare, from those who for so many years have felt for you as if you were indeed their sister? poor as is the gift, will you let Edward see it is not rejected?" and Ellen, as with a flushed cheek and quivering lip she spoke, placed on the arm of her cousin a bracelet, composed of her own and her brother's hair, and clasped with chaste yet massive gold. The braid was fine and delicate, while the striking contrast of the jet black and rich golden hair of which it was composed, combined with its valuable clasp, rendered it not an unfit offering on such a day.

"Is it to remind me of all my unkindness towards you, Ellen, in days past, of my hour of pride?" replied Caroline, in a low voice, as she threw her arm caressingly around her cousin, and fondly kissed her. "I will accept your gift, my dear Ellen, and sometimes look upon it thus."

"Nay, do not say so, dearest Caroline, or I shall feel inclined to take it even now from your arm, and never let you see it more; no, rather let it be a remembrance of those poor orphans, whose lives *you* have not done the least to render happy. Gratefully, affectionately, shall we ever think of you, dear Caroline, and, oh, may this little offering bid you sometimes think thus, and thus only of us."

The carriages were rather later than expected, and Lady Gertrude observing Caroline somewhat pale, though no other sign denoted agitation, endeavored, by talking more sportively than usually was her wont, to while away the time till the important moment arrived.

It came at length, and Caroline, with a faltering step, entered the carriage which conveyed her to the old and venerable church, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton and Lady Gertrude, who had promised to remain near her. The fair girls that held the rank of bridemaids followed, and three other carriages contained the invited guests to the wedding. Not a creature was visible to disturb by acclamations the bridal party on their route, and take from the calm and holy beauty of the early morning; but that the day was remembered was clearly visible, for there were garlands of the brightest, fairest flowers, which must, by their number and variety, have been culled from many gardens of many villages, festooning the hedges of the green lanes through which they passed; and many a gay pennon pendent from oak or stately elm, fluttered in the breeze. All was so still and calm, that ere the carriage stopped at the church porch, Caroline had conquered the inward trembling of her frame, and her heart

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thrilled not perhaps so anxiously as did both her parents' when, leaning on the arm of her proud and happy father, she walked steadily, even with dignity, up the church, where Mr. Howard, young Myrvin, Lord St. Eval, his parents, Lord Louis, Percy, Herbert, and Edward there stood, and a faint but expressive smile played round her lips, in answer to St. Eval's eager yet silent greeting. He could not speak, his feelings of happiness were too deep, too ecstatic for words, but she had but to look on his expressive face, and all, all was said.

There was a moment's solemn pause as they knelt beside the altar, and then the voice of Mr. Howard sounded, and its ever emphatic tones rung with even more than its usual solemnity on the ears of all the assembled relatives and friends, with thrilling power on the bride and bridegroom. Calmly and clearly Caroline responded; her cheek was pale, but her lip quivered not, and perhaps, in that impressive service, the agitation of her mother was deeper than her own. She struggled to retain her composure, she lifted up her soul in earnest prayer, that the blessing of her God might indeed hallow the ceremony on which she gazed; and ere her child arose, and led forward by her young enraptured husband, approached for her parent's blessing and embrace, she was enabled to give both without any visible emotion, save that her daughter might have felt the quick pulsations of her fond heart, as she pressed her in her arms.

We will not linger on the joyous festivity which pervaded the lordly halls of Oakwood on this eventful day.

The hour had come when Caroline, the young Countess of St. Eval, bade farewell to her paternal home. The nearest relatives of the bride and bridegroom had assembled with them in a small apartment, at Caroline's request, for a few minutes, till the carriage was announced, for though resolved not to betray her feelings, she could not bear to part from those she loved in public. She had changed her dress for a simple yet elegant travelling costume, and was now listening with respectful deference but glistening eyes to the fond words of her mother, who, twining her arm around her, had drawn her a little apart from the others, as if her farewell could not be spoken aloud; their attention was so arrested by a remark of Lord Malvern, and his son's reply, that they turned towards them.

"Do not again let me hear you say our Gertrude never

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looks animated or interested," the former said, addressing the Marchioness, somewhat triumphantly. "She is as happy, perhaps, if possible, even happier than any of us to-day, and, like a good girl, she shows it. Gertrude, love, is it your brother's happiness reflected upon you?"

"Let me answer for her, sir," replied St. Eval, eagerly. "You know not why she has so much reason to look, and, I trust, to feel happy. She sees her own good work, and noble, virtuous as she is, rejoices in it; without her, this day would never have dawned for me, Caroline would never have been mine, and both would have lived in solitary wretchedness. Yes, dearest Gertrude," he continued, "I feel how much I owe you, though I say but little. Happy would it be for every man, could he receive from his sister the comfort, the blessing I have from mine, and for every woman, were her counsels, like yours, guided by truth alone."

"The Earl and Countess of St. Eval left Oakwood about two o'clock, for their estate in Cornwall, Castle Terryn, in an elegant chariot and four superb grays, leaving a large party of fashionable friends and relations to lament their early departure." So spoke the fashionable chronicle in a paragraph on this marriage in high life, which contained items and descriptions longer and more graphic than we have any inclination to transcribe.

A select party of the Marquis of Malvern's and Mr. Hamilton's friends remained to dinner, and, at the request of Percy and Lord Louis, dancing for the younger guests concluded the evening. The day had dawned in joy, and no clouds disturbed its close. Fatigued, and her thoughts still clinging to her child, Mrs. Hamilton was glad to seek the retirement of her own room. Her thoughts turned on her Caroline, and so fondly did they linger there, that Emmeline's strange diversity of wild spirits and sudden but overpowering gloom did not occupy her mind as powerfully as they would otherwise have done; she did not regard them, save as the effects of excitement natural to such an eventful day; she guessed not that of all her household, the heart of her Emmeline was the heaviest, her spirits weighed down by a gloom so desponding, so overwhelming, that sleep for many hours fled from her eyes. She had powerfully exerted herself during the day, and now in solitude, darkness, and silence, the reflux of feeling was too violent for that young and, till lately, thoughtlessly joyous heart to bear. Her heavy eyes and pallid cheeks

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attracted notice indeed the following morning, but they were attributed to fatigue from the gay vigils of the preceding night, and gladly did the poor girl herself encourage the delusion, and obey her mother's playful command to lie down for a few hours, as a punishment for indulging an overplus of excitement.

Herbert's pleasure, too, the preceding day had been alloyed by anxiety; and perhaps his solicitude and his sister's sorrow proceeded from one and the same cause, which our readers will find at length, a few pages hence, when Arthur Myrvin becomes a prominent object in our history.

Pleasure, in a variety of festive shapes, but innocent in all, was for the next month the presiding genius of Oakwood and its vicinity. Lord Malvern's family remained as guests at Oakwood during that time, and some few college friends of Percy and Herbert; but Mr. Hamilton's other friends departed for their respective homes the week following the marriage.

The young Earl and Countess of St. Eval meanwhile resided at their beautiful retreat of Castle Terryn, which the taste of the young Earl had rendered in every respect a residence suited to the rank and feelings of those who claimed it as their own.

Nothing now prevented our young friend Ellen from joining in the amusements that offered themselves, and she enjoyed them even more than she had expected, for she was accompanied by her brother, who had deservedly become a universal favorite, and Mrs. Hamilton had the pleasure, at length, of seeing not only health but happiness beaming apparently unclouded on the countenance of her niece.

Mr. Grahame, for the sake of Lilla, who was becoming dearer each day to both her parents, for her true character for the first time stood clearly forth, struggled with his gloom, and accompanied her wherever her wishes led; and her cheerful spirits, her unpretending manners, and constant and active affection, manifesting itself in a thousand different ways, to amuse the couch of her now really ailing mother, did much to palliate the disappointment and misery the conduct of his elder daughter had occasioned.

Herbert's secret was still inviolably kept; no one suspected that he loved, much less that he was betrothed. Nearly two years had passed of that long period which must elapse ere Herbert could hope to make Mary his wife. They had glided

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quickly, very quickly by, and so too might the remainder, but there was a dark, foreboding feeling pressing heavily upon Herbert's heart, as he looked forward, that robbed anticipation of its charm, and rendered him even more pensive than from his boyhood had been his wont. To strangers, even to his family, he was still the same; to his God alone, he laid his spirit bare.

Six weeks after the marriage of Caroline, Oakwood and its neighborhood was as quiet as it had been when we knew it in former years.

Lord Malvern's family stayed ten days at Castle Terryn, by the pressing invitation of the young couple, and then returned to their estate in Dorsetshire, leaving Lady Gertrude, however, for a few weeks' longer residence with her brother and his wife. The young men returned to college. Lilla Grahame remained at home till after the Christmas vacation, when she was once more to reside with Mrs. Douglas for six months or a year longer, according to the state of her mother's health, who no longer wished to quit Woodlands; and therefore her husband gladly consented to her remaining there till Mrs. Hamilton paid her annual visit to London. About this time also, Ellen, accompanied by her brother, fulfilled her promise of visiting her old friend, Mr. Myrvin, and delighted him by making his pretty vicarage her residence till near the middle of November. Edward, with whom the kind old man was as much pleased as he had been with his sister, also remained at Llangwillan during that time, with the exception of three or four flying visits to Oakwood, and latterly to Castle Terryn, where Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, with Emmeline, were staying the few last weeks of his and his sister's visit at the vicarage. Their company was particularly soothing to Mr. Myrvin at this period; for the letters of his son were causing him extreme solicitude, revealing intentions, to understand which we must for a short period retrace our steps, and thus commence another chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

Young Myrvin had been, at the period of Caroline's marriage, rather more than a year as Mr. Howard's curate. At first, as we have seen, the example of Herbert had done much towards reconciling him to a profession, which was for many

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reasons opposed to his feelings. When in the company of his friend, he had imparted to him his struggles with the pride and ambition which still lurked within him, spite of all his endeavors and resolutions to conquer and banish them. While Herbert was near him all was well; his duty was regularly performed, in a manner that satisfied his rector, and sufficiently rewarded Mr. Hamilton for the interest he had taken in his and his father's welfare; but when Herbert left Oakwood, Arthur's distaste for his occupation returned with renewed strength, to which newly-dawned emotions added weight. Most painfully had Arthur, when first intimate with Mr. Hamilton, endeavored to guard himself from the danger to his peace, which he felt existed in the society of beings so amiable and attractive as were his daughters; but his efforts were vain, as our readers may have already discovered. There was a nameless, an indescribable charm in the appearance and manner of Emmeline which he could not resist. It was some few months ere the whole extent of evil was discovered, not, perhaps, entirely till Emmeline returned to London, and Oakwood was desolate, painfully desolate to the young man, who, when lingering within its ancient walls, forgot every thing around him, save the bright and beautiful being who was to him its charm. When, however, that fair form had departed from his sight, he was awakened to the delusive nature of his hopes, and with the knowledge, exquisite even in its despair, that he loved Emmeline Hamilton, his profession became more and more distasteful. Had he followed the paths of ambition, as his inclination prompted, had he but had the means of seeking some station whence he might at length have risen to eminence, he cared not what the obstacles, his union with her might not have been so difficult to overcome, or, at least, he might not have met her; and did he wish that such had been the case? no; misery in its most agonizing shape stood before him, and yet the cause of that misery was the one bright star that appeared to gild his lot.

A poor curate of a country parish, with no resources but his salary to increase his scanty meals, no power of rendering himself of conesquence in the eyes of the world; and, alas! the fruit of many years' hard labor from father to son—one-half of which might have rendered him sufficiently independent to have chosen his own profession—was gone. Poor as he was, could he ever look forward to possess the hand of Emmeline? he felt the utter impossibility, and bitterly he knew he loved but to

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despair. These contending feelings diverted his thoughts as may well be supposed, and caused him to be careless in the discharge of his clerical duties, abrupt and strange in his manner with Mr. Howard; and unfortunately there was one in the village who was ready to turn the simplest circumstance to the young curate's disadvantage.

It was not likely the sinful and licentious man who, by Mr. Hamilton's active exertions, had not only been dispossessed of the living of Llangwillan, but very nearly of his gown also, would permit these, what he termed injuries, to pass unavenged. Against the elder Myrvin he felt his efforts would be unavailing, nor did he feel inclined to try a second time, when he had once been foiled; but Arthur he believed a surer mark. A farm of some consequence was to be let on Mr. Hamilton's estate; it was very easy to settle in it a man lower in rank, but hard, unrelenting as himself, an unprincipled instrument of his will. The business was done, and the new neighbor, prepossessing in appearance and manners, speedily ingratiated himself with all, and even obtained, by a semblance of hard-working industry, and regular attendance at public worship, seconded by quiet and unobtrusive conduct, the notice and regard of his landlord, Mr. Hamilton.

This man had entered his farm about four or five months after Arthur had been installed as Mr. Howard's curate, and cautiously and yet successfully he executed the wily requirements of his employer. So guardedly did he work, that no one could trace to him, who ever spoke as the friend of their curate, the prejudice which had slowly but surely penetrated the mind of every man against him, and interpreted the simplest action in the worst light. There were some rumors afloat of misdemeanors during his college life; it mattered not whether they were true or false, they were received and encouraged by the credulous. He was a Welshman too, full of evil qualities, and clothed with invulnerable pride, which last idea was unfortunately confirmed by Myrvin's distaste for his profession, which prevented his entering into the joys and sorrows of his parishioners, mingling familiarly and kindly with them as a minister of God should do.

How or when this prejudice began, or what was its origin, not one of the good folks of the village could have told, for they really did not know; but still it existed, and Arthur knew it. He felt himself disliked, and instead of endeavoring to conciliate good-will and remove prejudice. his mind was in such a

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fevered state of excitement, that he indulged in every bitter feeling towards those with whom he had to deal, and shrunk yet more from the performance of his duty. Instances of careless neglect were often found, and became magnified in the relation. The young curate was not always at hand when his presence was principally required; he never left directions where he might be found. Abuse crept into that parish, which in the time of his predecessor had been one of the most orderly in Mr. Hamilton's domains—abuses in the younger inhabitants, at which old men looked grave, and cited the neglect of their curate as the cause, though to what abuses young Myrvin had given countenance all would have found it difficult to tell. That he did not rebuke them it was true; he did not perhaps observe them, but it was said, and justly, he must have been strangely blind not to do so.

The villagers understood not that pre-occupation of mind which does indeed render us blind to all things, save to the one intense subject of thought.

Complaints were made to and heard by the rector, who, faithful to his trust, visited his parish, made inquiries, heard tales concerning his curate that startled his charity, and finally spoke severely to Arthur on his careless and neglectful conduct. It would have been better for Arthur had pride remained banished during that interview; but, unfortunately, fired with indignation at any thing resembling censure even from a superior, it returned with full force, and by his haughty silence with regard to some of the charges brought against him, his ill-disguised contempt of others, confirmed every evil report concerning him which Mr. Howard had heard. Mildly he requested that the future might atone for the past, and that Myrvin would remember the sacred post he held. The unhappy young man heard him without reply; but when the rector had departed, he strove to think soberly on the charges brought against him, and look within himself to know if he deserved them. Neglect and carelessness—yes, he had given cause for both. Other accusations of much graver import he dismissed at once, satisfied that the very thought of such vices had never even for one moment stained his mind, and as secure in his own integrity and right feeling, as he was aware of the prejudice against him, he determined—as, alas! how many in such cases do—not to alter his general conduct, lest it should be said he tacitly admitted the truth of every report against him. Had he only been accused of neglect in parochial duties he might

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perhaps, if his troubled spirit had permitted him, have endeavored to attend more closely to them; but his pride prevented him from striving to obtain the good-will of those who seemed only alive to every circumstance tending to his disadvantage. Would he endeavor to conciliate those whom he well knew disliked him? no; the very act of so doing would be brought against him, and sternly he resolved that haughtiness and pride should still characterize his deportment. What mattered it what people thought or said, if it was untrue? he cared not; the world was a wilderness to his excited and irritated fancy, in which there bloomed but one sweet flower, too pure, too beautiful for him to touch. It was his doom he thought to grovel on the earth, hers to shine like a star in the sphere above him.

Not long after Mr. Howard's interview with his curate, Mr. Hamilton's family and his guests arrived at Oakwood, and Herbert eagerly sought his friend. He was shocked at the change he perceived in his appearance, which, though marked, was yet quite indescribable; that Arthur was unhappy, that his profession was more than ever distasteful to him, he soon discovered; but the real cause of these feelings he tried in vain to probe. He saw, with the deepest regret, that all his former exhortations on the subject, his earnest entreaties that Arthur would persevere till he brought a willing heart as an offering to his Maker, all had been without effect; but yet his kind heart could not cast away his friend, opposite as were their feelings on a subject which to Herbert was of vital importance. It was strange that a character such as Herbert Hamilton should have selected Arthur Myrvin for his chosen friend, yet so it was. It might have been pity, sympathy, which had first excited this friendship. The indignation he felt at the unjustifiable treatment Arthur had received while a servitor at college had excited an interest, which had at first completely blinded him to his many faults; and when they were discovered, the ardent desire and hope that he might be of service in removing them from the otherwise noble character of his friend, still preserved, and, indeed, heightened his regard. Though frequently disappointed during his absence, at the brevity and sometimes even confused style of Arthur's letters, he had buoyed himself up with the hope that his representations had had their effect, and he should find him, on his return, reconciled and happy in the exercise of his duties. Again he urged, with a kindness of manner that caused Arthur to wring his

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hand, and then pace the room in ill-concealed agony, the necessity, now that he had indeed taken orders, of endeavoring to do his Master's work on earth, of forcing his rebellious spirit to submission. Arthur listened to him attentively, sadly; but vainly Herbert strove to instil in him a portion of that heavenly love which was to him the mainspring of his life. Arthur loved with an intensity, which utterly prevented his looking up to heaven as the goal, to reach which all earthly toil was welcome; and still not even to Herbert did he breathe one syllable of the fire that was inwardly consuming him. Had he been any one but Herbert Hamilton, the unhappy young man would have sought and found relief in his confidence; but not to the brother of the being he loved, oh, not to him—he could not, dared not.

"Herbert," he would say, in a voice hoarse with contending feelings, "did I dare betray the tortured heart, the true cause of my misery, you would pity, even if you condemned me; but ask it not—ask it not, it shall never pass my lips; one thing only I beseech you, and I do so from the regard you have ever seemed to feel for me. However you may hear my character traduced, my very conduct may confirm every evil report, yet believe them not; I may be miserable, imprudent, mad, but never, never believe the name of Arthur Myrvin is stained with vice or guilt. Herbert, promise me this, and come what may, one friend at least is mine."

Herbert gazed on him with doubt, astonishment, and sorrow, yet an irresistible impulse urged him to promise all he asked, and Myrvin looked relieved; but painfully he felt, though he noticed it not to his friend, that the manner of Mr. Hamilton towards him was changed; cordiality and kindness had given place to coldness and reserve.

The whirl of a gay and happy London season had produced no change in the outward appearance and demeanor of Emmeline Hamilton. It had not been to her the ordeal it had been to her sister. She came forth from the gay world the same pure, innocent being as she had entered it. Admired she was by all with whom she was associated, but her smile was not sought for, her conversation not courted, as had been Caroline's, therefore her temptations had not been so great, but she was universally beloved.

Her mother sometimes wondered that Emmeline, keenly susceptible as she was to every other emotion, should still remain so insensible to any thing resembling love. "She is

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indeed still the same innocent and darling child," she thought, and rested in pleased and satisfied security. She little knew, penetrating even as she was, that those young affections were already unconsciously engaged, that one manly figure, one melancholy yet expressive face utterly prevented the reception of any other. Emmeline knew not herself the extent of influence that secret image had obtained; she guessed not the whole truth until that night when her marriage had been jestingly alluded to, and then it burst upon her, stunning her young mind with a sense of scarcely defined, yet most painful consciousness. Arthur Myrvin had looked to Emmeline's return to Oakwood with many mingled feelings; she might be perhaps, even as her sister, a betrothed bride; he might have to witness, perhaps to officiate at her nuptials; he might see her courted, receiving attentions from and bestowing smiles on others, not casting one look or one thought on him, who for her would have gladly died. The idea was agony, and it was the sufferings occasioned by the anticipation of ideal misery, that had produced the change in the face and form which Herbert had beheld and regretted.

They met, and as if fortune favored their secret but mutual affection, alone, the first time since Emmeline had returned from London. Unaccustomed to control, and at that time quite unconscious she had any thing to conceal, though wondering why every pulse should throb, and her cheek so flush and pale, her agitation of manner, her expressed and evidently felt sorrow for the traces of suffering she beheld, sunk as balm on the sorrowing heart of the young man, and his first three or four interviews with her were productive of a happiness so exquisite, that it almost succeeded in banishing his gloom; but short indeed was that period of relief. Speedily he saw her, as he had expected, surrounded by gay young men of wealth and station. He felt they looked down on him; they thought not of him; as a rival he was unworthy, as incapable of loving a being so exalted; but in the midst of these wretched thoughts, there arose one, that for a brief space was so bright, so glad, so beautiful, that while it lasted every object partook of its rays. He marked her, he looked, with eyes rendered clear from jealousy, for some sign, it mattered not how small, to say she preferred the society of others to his own; ready as he was to look on the darkest side of things, he felt the hesitating glance, the timid tone with which she had latterly addressed him, contrary as it was to the mischievous

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playfulness which had formerly marked her intercourse with him, was dearer, oh, how much dearer, than the gayety in which she had indulged with others. This change in her manner was unremarked by her family.

The eye of love, however, looked on those slight signs in a very different light. Did she, could she love one so unworthy? The very idea seemed to make him feel as a new and better man. He covered his eyes with his hands, lest any outward sign should break that blessed illusion, and then he started, and returning recollection brought with it momentary despair. Did she even love him—were even her parents to consent,—his own,—for his vivid and excited fancy for one minute imagined what in more sober moments he knew was impossible—yet, even were such difficulties removed, would he, could he take that fair and fragile creature from a home of luxury and every comfort, to poverty? What had he to support a wife? How could they live, and what hope had he of increasing in any way his fortune? Was he not exciting her affections to reduce them, like his own, to despair? And could she, beautiful and delicate as she was, could she bear the deprivation of his lot? She would never marry without the consent of her parents, and their approval would never be his, and even if it were, he had nothing, not the slightest hope of gaining any thing wherewith to support her; and she, if indeed she loved him, he should see her droop and sink before his eyes, and that he could not bear; his own misery might be endured, but not hers. No! He paced the small apartment with reckless and disordered steps. His own doom was fixed; nothing could now prevent it; but hers, it might not be too late. He would withdraw from her sight, he would leave her presence, and for ever; break the spell that bound him near her. Ere that hasty walk in his narrow room was completed his resolution was fixed; he would resign his curacy, and depart from the dangerous fascinations hovering round him.

Yet still he lingered. If he had been too presumptuous in thinking thus of Emmeline—if he were indeed nothing to her, why should he inflict this anguish on himself? Why need he tear himself from her? The night of Edward's return, while in one sense it caused him misery, by the random remark of Lord Louis, yet, by the agitation of Emmeline, the pang was softened, though he was strengthened in his resolve. Four days afterwards, the very evening of that

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day when Mr. Howard had alluded to his neglect of duties before Herbert and his cousins, he tendered his resignation, coldly and proudly refusing any explanation, or assigning any reason for so doing, except that he wished to obtain a situation as tutor in any nobleman or gentleman's family about to travel. So greatly had the mind of Mr. Howard been prejudiced against the unhappy young man, by the false representations of his parishioners, that he rather rejoiced at Myrvin's determination, having more than once feared, if his conduct did not alter, he should be himself compelled to dismiss him from the curacy. But while pleased at being spared a task so adverse to his benevolent nature, he yet could not refrain from regarding this strange and apparently sudden resolution as a tacit avowal of many of those errors with which he was charged.

Feeling thus, it will be no subject of surprise that Mr. Howard accepted his curate's resignation; but while he did so, he could not refrain from giving the young man some kind and good advice as to his future life, which Arthur, aware the rector regarded him through the medium of prejudice, received not in the same kind spirit as it was offered. He listened silently, indeed, but with an air of pride which checked all Mr. Howard's really kind intentions in his favor.

The rector, aware that Mr. Hamilton would be annoyed and displeased at this circumstance, did not inform him of Myrvin's intentions till some few weeks after Caroline's marriage, not, indeed, till he felt compelled by the wish to obtain his approval of a young clergyman who had been his pupil, and was eager to secure any situation near Mr. Howard, and to whom, therefore, the curacy Arthur had resigned would be indeed a most welcome gift. Mr. Hamilton was even more disturbed, when all was told him, than Mr. Howard had expected. It seemed as if Arthur had forgotten every tie of gratitude which Mr. Hamilton's services to his father, even forgetting those to himself, certainly demanded. His determined resolution to assign no reason for his proceeding but the one above mentioned, told against him, and Mr. Hamilton, aware of the many evil reports flying about concerning the young man, immediately imagined that he resigned the curacy fearing discovery of misdemeanors which might end even more seriously.

Herbert, too, was deeply pained that his friend had left him, to learn such important intelligence from the lips of

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another instead of imparting it himself. It explained all the apparent contradictions of Arthur's conduct the last month, but it surprised and grieved him; yet the mystery caused him both anxiety and sadness, for Myrvin was evidently determined in no way to solve it. That he was unhappy in no ordinary degree was to the eye of friendship very evident, not only in the frequent wildness of his manner, but in the haggard cheek and bloodshot eye; and sympathy was thus ever kept alive in one so keenly susceptible of the woes of others as was Herbert Hamilton; sympathy, continually excited, prevented all decrease of interest and regard. Percy was irritated and annoyed; Myrvin had disappointed him. His conduct, in return for Mr. Hamilton's kindness, appeared ungrateful as unaccountable, and this caused the more fiery temper of the young heir of Oakwood to ignite and burst forth in the presence of Arthur, whose meek forbearance, and, he now began to fancy, silent suffering tamed him after a brief period, and caused him, with his usual frankness and quick transition of mood, to make him an apology for his violence. He was touched by the young man's manner, but they continued not on the same terms of friendly intimacy as formerly.

Mrs. Hamilton's charitable nature, heightened also by Herbert's unchanging regard, would not permit her to credit the tales that were abroad concerning him. She regretted his determination, for it appeared like wilfully casting away the friendship and interest of those who were likely to do him service. She guessed not the real motive of his resolve; if she had, she would have honored even as she now regarded him with pity; but almost for the first time the penetration of Mrs. Hamilton was at fault. Emmeline's feelings, even as those of Arthur, were successfully concealed; from her brother Herbert, she had first heard of Myrvin's intentions. She listened in silence, but her lip quivered and her cheek grew pale; and when she sought the solitude of her own room tears relieved her, and enabled her to act up to her determination, cost what it might, to be the same playful, merry girl before her parents as was her wont, not that she meant in any way to deceive them, but she had learned that she loved Arthur Myrvin, and knew also that to become his wife, situated as they were, was a thing impossible.

Had Emmeline really been the romantic girl so generally believed, she would now have done all in her power to over-

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come every difficulty, by regarding poverty as the only criterion of true love; she would have fed her imagination with visions of herself and Arthur, combating manfully against evil, so they shared it together; she would have robed poverty with an imaginary halo, and welcomed it, rejoicing to become his wife, but such were not her feelings. The careful hand of maternal love had done its work, and though enthusiasm and romance were generally the characteristics most clearly visible, yet there was a fund of good and sober sense within, that few suspected, and of which even her parents knew not the extent, and that plain sense effectually prevented her ever becoming the victim of imagination.

Emmeline loved Arthur Myrvin, loved him with an intensity, a fervor, which only those who possess a similar enthusiastic temperament can understand. She felt convinced she was not indifferent to him; but agony as it was to her young heart to part from him, in all probability for ever, yet she honored his resolution; she knew, she felt its origin, and she rejoiced that he went of his own accord, ere their secret feelings were discovered.

Notwithstanding all her endeavors, her spirits flagged, and at the conclusion of the Oakwood festivities she appeared so pale and thin, that Mrs. Hamilton consulted Mr. Maitland. Emmeline had resisted, as much as she could without failure of duty, all appeal to medical advice, and it was with trembling she awaited his opinion; when, however, it was given, she rejoiced that she had been consulted, for had her parents entertained any suspicions of the real cause, it would have completely banished them. He said she was merely suffering from the effects of a lengthened period of excitement, that quiet and regularity of pursuits would in all probability restore both health and spirits. A smile, faint and apparently without meaning, played round her lips as her mother repeated what he had said, and playfully declared she should most strictly adhere to his advice.

Arthur had shrunk from the task of acquainting his father with his intentions, for he well knew they would give him pain, and cause him extreme solicitude, and he postponed doing so till his plans for the future were determined. He had even requested Ellen and Edward, who were still his friends, to say but little concerning him during their stay at Llangwillan; but if they revealed his intentions, he implored them to use all their influence with his father to reconcile him to

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this bitter disappointment of his cherished hopes He had determined not to return to Llangwillan; he felt he could not bear to see his parent with the consciousness that he had acted contrary to his wishes; he would not therefore do so till he had succeeded in obtaining the situation he so earnestly desired. But as the period when he should resign his curacy now rapidly approached, he no longer refrained from writing to his father, and Ellen proved her regard for both father and son, by affectionately endeavoring to soothe Mr. Myrvin's disappointment and solicitude, which were, as his son expected, extreme. She succeeded, at length, in persuading him, that could he obtain the situation he so much desired, Arthur would be more likely to advance than in retaining his present occupation.

The period of Arthur's departure came a few days before Christmas. He went to bid Mr. Hamilton farewell the very morning on which that gentleman intended riding over to Exeter to meet Ellen and her brother, on their return from Llangwillan. To Arthur this interview was indeed a painful one. From the moment his resolution to depart had been fixed, that moment the blessed truth had strangely and suddenly burst upon him that he was beloved; a new spirit appeared to dawn within, and midst the deep agony it was to feel he was parting for ever from a being he so dearly loved, there was a glow of approving conscience that nerved him to its endurance. It was this which had enabled him to conquer his irritation at Percy's violence, and the grief it was to feel that Herbert too much doubted him. He esteemed, he loved, was deeply grateful to Mr. Hamilton, and his evident displeasure was hard to bear; yet even that he had borne, strengthened by secret yet honorable incentives. But that morning, his heart throbbing with ill-concealed anguish, for the following day he would be miles from Oakwood, never, never to behold Emmeline again, his frame weakened, his blood fevered from the long-continued mental struggle, the stern address of Mr. Hamilton, stung him to the quick.

Mr. Hamilton was not one of those who could disguise his sentiments. If interested at all in the fortunes of another, he felt he must speak, however severe in some cases his words might seem. As the chosen friend of his son—the victim for a time of oppression and injury—young Myrvin had excited his interest too powerfully for him entirely to abandon it even now, and therefore he spoke plainly to him even as he thought.

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"You are casting from you," he said, "a friend who was both able and willing to assist you, apparently without the slightest regret, even with indifference. As the chosen and dear companion of my valued son, your interests were mine, and gladly would I have done all in my power to forward your views, had your conduct been such as I expected and required, but such it appears has been far from the case. Your unaccountable resignation of a situation, which, though not one of great emolument, was yet of value, unhappily confirms every evil report I have heard. The same unsteady and wavering spirit which urges you to travel, instead of permitting you to remain contented in the quiet discharge of sacred duties, may lead you yet more into error, and I warn you as a friend, govern it in time. You may deem me intrusive in my remarks, I speak but for your own good, young man; and though your forgetfulness of the sacred nature of your profession could not fail to lessen my esteem and regard, yet for your father's sake I would implore you to remember that your calling involves duties of the most solemn nature, and renders you a much more responsible being both in the sight of God and man."

Arthur answered him not. His cheek burned and his heart throbbed, but it was the father of Emmeline, the benefactor of his father, who spoke, and he might have spoken more and more severely, but he would have been unanswered; even to defend his own stainless integrity and innocence he could not have spoken, the power of speech appeared to have entirely deserted him. Never could he have been said to hope, but the words he had heard proved to him that he had lost the esteem and regard of Mr. Hamilton, and darkened his despair. He fixed his large, dark gray eyes earnestly on Mr. Hamilton's face, so earnestly, that for some time afterwards that look was recalled with melancholy feelings; he bent his head silently yet respectfully, and quitted the room without uttering a single word.

Struck by his haggard features, and the deeply mournful tone of his voice, as he bade her farewell and thanked her for all her kindness, Mrs. Hamilton, whose kindly nature had never permitted her to share her husband's prejudices against him, invited him, if his time permitted, to accompany her on her walk to Woodlands, where she had promised Lady Helen and Lilla to spend the day during her husband's absence. There was such extreme kindness in her manner, pervading also her words, that Arthur felt soothed and comforted, though

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he found it difficult to converse with her on the indifferent subjects she started, nor could he answer her concerning his plans for the future, for with a burning cheek and faltering voice he owned they were not yet determined. He gazed on her expressive features, which responded to the interest she expressed, and he longed to confess the whole truth, and implore her pity, her forgiveness for having dared to love her child; but with a strong effort he restrained himself, and they parted, in kindness indeed, but nothing more.

"Emmeline is gone down to the school," said Mrs. Hamilton, unasked, and thus betraying how entirely she was free from all suspicions of the truth, "and she goes from hence to see a poor woman in the outskirts of the village. You must not leave us without wishing her farewell, or she will think you have not forgiven all the mischievous jokes she has played off upon you so continually."

Arthur started, as he looked on her face. Again the wish arose to tell her all, but it was instantly checked, and bowing with the deepest reverence, as he pressed in his her offered hand, hastily withdrew.

Should he indeed see Emmeline, and alone? Her mother's voice had bid him seek her, but the same motives that bade him resign his curacy, caused him now to feel the better course would be to fly at once from the fascination of her presence, lest in a moment of excitement he should be tempted to betray the secret of his love; but while passion struggled with duty, the flutter of her dress, as Emmeline suddenly emerged from a green lane, and walked slowly, and, he thought, sadly along, caught his eye, and decided the contest.

"I will be guarded; not a word of love shall pass my lips. I will only gaze on her sweet face, and listen to the kind tones of her dear voice again before we part for ever," he thought, and darting forwards, was speedily walking by her side. He believed himself firm in his purpose, strong, unwavering in his resolution; but his heart had been wrung to its inmost core, his spirit bent beneath its deep, wild agony, and at that moment temptation was too powerful; he could not, oh, he could not part from her, leave her to believe as others did. Could he bear that she, for whose smile he would have toiled day and night, to be regarded with esteem, to obtain but one glance of approbation, could he bear that she should think of him as the unworthy being he was represented? No! he felt he could not, and in one moment of unrestrained and passionate feel-

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ing, his love was told, the treasured secret of his breaking heart revealed.

Emmeline heard, and every limb of her slight frame trembled, almost convulsively, with her powerful struggle for composure, with the wish still to conceal from him the truth that he was to her even as she to him, dear even as life itself; but the struggle was vain. The anguish which the sight of his deep wretchedness inflicted on that young and gentle bosom, which from childhood had ever bled for others' woes, was too powerful, and, led on by an irresistible impulse, she acknowledged his affections were returned; for she felt did she not speak it, the extreme agitation she could not hide would at once betray the truth, but at the same instant she avowed her unhappy love, she told him they must part and for ever. She conjured him for her sake to adhere to his resolution and leave the neighborhood of Oakwood; she thanked him with all the deep enthusiasm of her nature, for that regard for her peace which she felt confident had from the first dictated his resigning his curacy, and braving the cruel prejudices of all around him, even those of her own father, rather than betray his secret and her own; rather than linger near her, to play upon her feelings, and tempt her, in the intensity of her affection for him, to forget the duty, the gratitude, the love, she owed her parents.

"Wherefore should I hide from you that the affection, the esteem you profess and have proved for me are returned with equal force?" continued this noble-minded and right-feeling girl, as they neared Mrs. Langford's cottage, where she felt this interview must cease—she could sustain it no longer.

"I would not, I could not thus wound the kind and generous heart of one, to whose care I feel I could intrust my earthly happiness; but as it is, situated as we both are, we must submit to the decrees of Him, who, in infinite wisdom and mercy would, by this bitter trial, evince our love for Him and try us in the ordeal of adversity and sorrow. He alone can know the extent of that love we bear each other; and He, if we implore Him, can alone give us sufficient strength to obtain the conquest of ourselves. We part, Arthur—and if not for ever, at least till many years have past. Forget me, Arthur; you have by the honorable integrity of your conduct wrung from me a secret I had deemed would have died with me; for I knew and felt, and so too must you, its utter, utter hopelessness."

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Her voice, for the first time, faltered; audibly, but with a strong effort, she rallied; "I do not ask from you an explanation of the rumors to your discredit, which are flying about this neighborhood, for not one of them do I believe; you have some secret enemy, whose evil machinations will, I trust, one day be clearly proved; perhaps you have been neglectful, heedless, and I may have been the cause. But let not this be, dear Arthur; let me not have the misery of feeling that an ill-fated love for one thus separated from you, has rendered reckless that character which is naturally so good, so bright, and noble. Oh, for my sake, yield not to despair; shake off this lethargy, and prove to the whole world that they have wronged you, that the fame of Arthur Myrvin is as stainless as his name."

Arthur moved not his eyes from her as she thus spoke, every word she uttered increased the strong devotion he felt towards her; but as the purity, the nobleness of her character was displayed even clearer than ever before him, he felt himself unworthy to possess her; and yet that such a being loved him, avowed her love, acknowledged that to him she could intrust her earthly happiness without a single doubt, that knowledge exalted him above himself, soothed that morbid sensitiveness which had oppressed him, and, ere her sweet voice had ceased to urge him on to exertion, to trust in Him who had ordained their mutual trial, he had inwardly resolved to nerve himself to the task, and prove that she was not deceived in him, that he would deserve her favorable opinion. He gazed on her as if that look should imprint those fair and childlike features on the tablet of his memory.

"I will obey you," he said at length, in a voice hoarse with contending emotions. "We part, and when I return years hence, it may be to see you the happy wife of one in all respects more suited to you; but then, even then, although love for me may have passed away, remember it is you, whose gentle voice has saved a fellow creature from the sinful recklessness of despair; you who have pointed out the path which, I call heaven and earth to witness, I will leave no means untried till it is trodden. Had you refused to hear me, had you scorned my affections, left me in displeasure for my presumption, oh, Emmeline, I might indeed have become that which I am believed; but now you have inspired me with a new spirit The recollection that you have not deemed me so utterly unworthy, will never, never leave me; it shall cling to me, and if evil assail me, that fond thought shall overcome temptation

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The vain longings for a more stirring profession shall no more torment me, it is enough *you* have not despised me; and however irksome may be my future duties, they shall be performed with a steadiness and zeal which shall procure me esteem, if it do no more, and reconcile my conscience to my justly offended Maker. If, in future years, you chance to hear the name of Arthur Myrvin spoken in terms of respect and love, you will trace your own work; and oh, Emmeline, may that thought, that good deed, prove the blessing I would now call down upon your head."

He paused, in strong and overpowering emotion, and Emmeline sought in vain for words to reply; they had reached the entrance to Mrs. Langford's little garden, and now the hour had come when they must part. "Farewell, dearest Arthur, may God bless you, and give you peace! Leave me now," she added, after a moment's pause. But Arthur could only fix his eyes mournfully on her face, as though her last look should never leave him; then, suddenly, he raised her hand to his quivering lip. One moment, through blinding tears, he gazed on that dear being he loved so well; yet another moment, and he was gone.

Emmeline leaned heavily against the little gate, a sickness as of death for a moment crept over her and paralyzed every limb. With a strong effort she roused herself and entered the cottage, feeling greatly relieved to find Mrs. Langford was absent. She sunk on a low seat, and burying her face in her hands, gave way for the first time to a violent burst of tears; yet she had done her duty, she had acted rightly, and that thought enabled her to conquer the natural weakness which, for a short time, completely overpowered her, and when Mrs. Langford returned, no signs of agitation were evident, except a more than ordinary paleness, which, in her present delicate state of health, was easily attributable to fatigue.

Now, it so happened that Widow Langford possessed a shrewdness and penetration of character, which we sometimes find in persons of her class, but which was in her case so combined, from long residence in Mr. Hamilton's family, with a delicacy and refinement, that she generally kept her remarks very much more secret than persons in her sphere of life usually do. It was fortunate for our poor Emmeline that it was so, for the widow had chanced to be an unseen witness of Arthur's impassioned farewell. She heard the concluding words of both marked the despairing glance of Arthur, the

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deadly paleness of her dear Miss Emmeline, and connecting these facts with previous observations, she immediately imagined the truth; and with that kindness to which we have alluded, she retreated and lingered at a neighbor's till she thought her young lady had had sufficient time to recover her composure, instead of acting as most people would have done, hastened up to her, under the idea she was about to faint, and by intrusive solicitations, and yet more intrusive sympathy in such a matter, betrayed that her secret had been discovered.

Mrs. Langford shrunk from acting thus, although this was not the first time she had suspected the truth. She knew Emmeline's character well, and doted on her with all the affection a very warm heart could bestow. Having been head nurse in Mrs. Hamilton's family from Herbert's birth, she loved them all as her nurslings, but Emmeline's very delicate health when a baby, appeared to have rendered her the good woman's especial favorite.

At the time of Caroline's marriage, Miss Emmeline's future prospects were, of course, the theme of the servants' hall; some of whom thought it not at all improbable, that as Miss Hamilton had become a countess, Miss Emmeline might one day be a marchioness, perhaps even a duchess. Now Widow Langford thought differently, though she kept her own counsel, and remained silent. Miss Emmeline, she fancied, would be very much happier in a more humble sphere, and settled down quietly near Oakwood, than were she to marry some great lord, who would compel her to live amidst the wear and tear of a gay and fashionable life. Arthur Myrvin chanced to be a very great favorite of the widow's, and if he could but get a richer living, and become rather more steady in his character, and if Miss Emmeline really loved him, as somehow she fancied she did, why it would not only be a very pretty, but a very happy match, she was quite sure.

The good widow was, however, very careful not in the least to betray to her young lady that she had been a witness of their parting; for, after an expression of pleasure at seeing her there, an exclamation of surprise and regret at her pale cheeks, she at once branched off into a variety of indifferent subjects concerning the village, topics in which she knew Emmeline was interested, and concluded with—

"And so our young curate is, indeed, going to start for Exeter to-night, in the Totness mail. I am so very sorry, though I do not dare to say so to any of my uncharitable

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neighbors. I did not think he would go so soon, poor dear Mr. Myrvin."

"It is not too soon, nurse, when every tongue has learned to speak against him," replied Emmeline, calmly, though a sudden flush rose to her cheek. "He must be glad to feel Mr. Howard no longer requires his services."

"But dear Miss Emmeline, you surely do not believe one word of all the scandalous reports about him?" said the widow, earnestly.

"I do not wish to do so, nor will I, without more convincing proofs," replied Emmeline, steadily. "My father, I fear, is deeply prejudiced, and that, in one of his charitable and kindly feelings, would tell against him."

"My master has been imposed on by false tales, my dear young lady; do not let them do so on you," said the good woman, with an eagerness which almost surprised her young companion. "I am quite convinced he has some secret enemy in the parish, I am pretty certain who it is; and I do not despair one day of exposing all his schemes, and proving Mr. Myrvin is as well disposed and excellent a young man as any in the parish. I know who the villain is in this case, and my master shall know it too, one day." Emmeline struggled to subdue the entreaty that was bursting from her lips, but entirely she could not, and seizing the widow's hand, she exclaimed, in a low agitated voice—

"Do so; oh, proclaim the falsehood, the cruelty of these reports, and I—I mean Arthur—Mr. Myrvin will bless you. It is so cruel, in such early youth, to have one's character defamed, and he has only that on which to rest; tell me, promise me you will not forget this determination."

"To the very best of my ability, Miss Emmeline, I promise you," replied Mrs. Langford, more and more confirmed in her suspicions. "But do not excite yourself so much, dear heart. Mr. Maitland said you were to be kept quite quiet, you know, and you have fatigued yourself so much, you are trembling like an aspen."

"My weakness must plead my excuse for my folly, dear nurse," answered Emmeline, striving by a smile to control two or three tears, which, spite of all resistance, would chase one another down her pale cheek. "Do not mind me, I shall get well very soon. And how long do you think it will be before you succeed in your wish?"

"Not for some time, my dear young lady; at present I

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have only my suspicions; I must watch cautiously, ere they can be confirmed. I assure you I am as anxious that poor young man's character should be cleared as you can be."

A faint smile for a moment played round Emmeline's lips, as she pressed the good woman's hand, and said she was satisfied. A little while longer she lingered, then rousing herself with a strong effort, she visited, as she had intended, two or three poor cottages, and forced herself to listen to and enter with apparent interest on those subjects most interesting to their inmates. In her solitary walk thence to Woodlands she strenuously combated with herself, lest her thoughts should adhere to their loved object, and lifting up her young enthusiastic soul in fervent faith and love to its Creator, she succeeded at length in obtaining the composure she desired, and in meeting her mother, at Woodlands, with a smile and assumed playfulness, which did not fail, even at Mrs. Hamilton's gentle reproof for her lengthened absence and over fatigue, to which she attributed the paleness resting on her cheek, and which even the return of Edward and Ellen to Oakwood, and the many little pleasures incidental to a reunion, could not chase away.

Three weeks passed quietly on; Oakwood was once more the seat of domestic enjoyment. The Earl and Countess St. Eval spent the week of Christmas with them, which greatly heightened every pleasure, and Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, instead of seeking in vain for one dear face in the happy group around them on the eve of Christmas and the New Year, beheld beside their peaceful hearth another son, beneath whose fond and gentle influence the character of Caroline, already chastened, was merging into beautiful maturity; and often as Mrs. Hamilton gazed on that child of care and sorrow, yet of deep unfailing love, she felt, indeed, in her a mother's recompense was already given.

Edward's leave of absence was extended to a longer period than usual. His ship had been dismantled, and now lay untenanted with the other floating castles of the deep. Her officers and men had been dispersed, and other stations had not yet been assigned to them. Nor did young Fortescue intend joining a ship again as midshipman; his buoyant hopes—the expectations of a busy fancy—told him that perhaps the epaulette of a lieutenant would glitter on his shoulder. On his first return home he had talked continually of his examination and his promotion, but as the time neared for him to accom-

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pany his uncle to London for the purpose, his volubility was checked.

Caroline and her husband returned to Castle Terryn, and, scarcely four weeks after Myrvin's departure, Emmeline received from the hands of Mrs. Langford an unexpected and most agitating letter. It was from Arthur; intense mental suffering, in the eyes of her it addressed, breathed through every line; but that subject, that dear yet forbidden subject, their avowed and mutual love, was painfully avoided; it had evidently been a struggle to write thus calmly, impassionately, and Emmeline blessed him for his care: it merely implored her to use her influence with St. Eval to obtain his interference with his father on his (Arthur's) behalf. Lord Malvern he had heard was seeking for a gentleman to accompany his son Louis as tutor and companion to Germany; there, for the two following years, to improve his education, and enable him to obtain a thorough knowledge of the language and literature of the country. Arthur had applied for the situation, and recognized by the Marquis as the young clergyman he had so often seen at Oakwood, he received him with the utmost cordiality and kindness. On being questioned as to his reasons for resigning his curacy, he frankly owned that so quiet a life was irksome to him, and a desire to travel had occasioned the wish to become tutor to any nobleman or gentleman's son about to do so. He alluded himself to the reports to his prejudice, avowed with sorrow that neglect of parochial duties was indeed a just accusation, but from every other, he solemnly assured the Marquis, his conscience was free. Not one proof of vice or even irregularity of conduct had been or could be brought against him. He farther informed Emmeline, that not only the Marquis but the Marchioness and the whole family appeared much disposed in his favor, particularly Lord Louis, who declared that if he might not have him for a tutor, he would have no one else, and not go to Germany or to any school at all. The Marquis had promised to give him a decided answer as soon as he had consulted Lord St. Eval on the subject. He knew, Myrvin concluded, that her influence was great with the Earl, and it was for that reason and that alone he had ventured to address her.

Emmeline reflected long and deeply on this letter. Had she listened to the powerful pleadings of her deep affection, she would have shrunk from thus using her influence, however small, to send him from England,—yet, could she hesitate?

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had she indeed forgotten herself to follow that only path of duty she had pointed out to him? Brief indeed were her moments of indecision. She wrote instantly to St. Eval in Arthur's favor, but so guardedly and calmly worded her letter, that no suspicion of any kinder or more interested feeling than that of her peculiarly generous and warm-hearted nature could have been suspected, either by St. Eval or her sister. She excused her boldness in writing thus unadvisedly and secretly, by admitting that she could not bear that an unjust and unfounded prejudice should so cruelly mar the prospects of so young, and, she believed, injured a fellow-creature. She was well aware that her father shared this prejudice, and therefore she entreated St. Eval not to mention her share in the transaction.

Lord St. Eval willingly complied with her wishes. She had been, as we know, ever his favorite. He loved her perfect artlessness and playfulness, her very enthusiasm rendered her an object of his regard; besides which, on this point, his opinion coincided with hers. He felt assured young Myrvin was unhappy—on what account he knew not—but he was convinced he did not deserve the aspersions cast upon him; and, directly after the receipt of Emmeline's earnest letter, he came unexpectedly to the parish, made inquiries, with the assistance of Mrs. Langford, and returned to Castle Terryn, perfectly satisfied that it would certainly be no disadvantage to his brother to be placed under the care and companionship of Arthur Myrvin. He lost no time in imparting this opinion to his father; and Emmeline very quickly learned that the whole affair was arranged. Lord Louis was wild with joy that Arthur Myrvin, whom he had liked at Oakwood, was to be his tutor, instead of some prim formidable dominie, and to this news was superadded the intelligence that, the second week in February, the Rev. Arthur Myrvin and his noble pupil quitted England for Hanover, where they intended to make some stay.

Emmeline heard, and the words, "will he not write me one line in farewell ere he leaves England?" were murmured internally, but were instantly suppressed, for she knew the very wish was a departure from that line of stern control she had laid down for herself and him; and that letter, that dear, that precious letter—precious for it came from him, though not one word of love was breathed,—ought not that to be destroyed? Had she any right now to cherish it, when the aid she sought

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had been given, its object gained? Did her parents know she possessed that letter, that it was dear to her, what would be their verdict? And was she not deceiving them in thus retaining, thus cherishing a remembrance of him she had resolved to forget? Emmeline drew forth the precious letter; she gazed on it long, wistfully, as if, in parting from it, the pang of separation with the beloved writer was recalled. She pressed her lips upon it, and then with stern resolution dropped it into the fire that blazed upon the hearth; and, with cheek pallid and breath withheld, she marked the utter annihilation of the first and last memento she possessed of him she loved.

Mrs. Hamilton's anxiety on Emmeline's account did not decrease. She still remained pale and thin, and her spirits more uneven, and that energy which had formerly been such a marked feature in her character appeared at times entirely to desert her; and Mr. Maitland, discovering that the extreme quiet and regularity of life which he had formerly recommended was not quite so beneficial as he had hoped, changed in a degree his plan, and advised diversity of recreation and amusements of rather more exertion than he had at first permitted. Poor Emmeline struggled to banish thought, that she might repay by cheerfulness the tenderness of her parents and cousins, but she was new to sorrow; her first was indeed a bitter trial, the more so because even from her mother it was as yet concealed. She succeeded for a time in her wishes, so far as to gratify her mother by an appearance of her usual enthusiastic pleasure in the anticipation of a grand ball, given by Admiral Lord N——, at Plymouth, which it was expected the Duke and Duchess of Clarence would honor with their presence. Ellen anxiously hoped her brother would return to Oakwood in time to accompany them. He had passed his examination with the best success, but on the advice of Sir Edward Manly, they both lingered in town, in the hope that being on the spot the young officer would not be forgotten in the list of promotions. He might, Edward gayly wrote, chance to return to Oakwood a grade higher than he left it

CHAPTER XV.

"ELLEN, I give you joy!" exclaimed Emmeline, entering the room where her mother and cousin were sitting one afternoon

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and speaking with some of her former cheerfulness. "There is a carriage coming down the avenue, and though I cannot quite distinguish it, I have second sight sufficient to fancy it is papa's. Edward declared he would not tell us when he was coming home, and therefore there is nothing at all improbable in the idea that he will fire a broadside on us, as he calls it, unexpectedly."

"I would willingly stand fire to see him safe anchored off this coast," replied Ellen, smiling. "Lord N——'s ball will lose half its charms if he be not there."

"What! with all your enthusiastic admiration of her Royal Highness, whom you will have the honor of seeing? For shame, Ellen."

"My enthusiastic admiration; rather yours, my dear Emmeline. Mine is so quiet that it does not deserve the name of enthusiasm," replied Ellen, laughing. "Nor could I have imagined you would have honored me so far as to give me an attribute in your eyes so precious."

"I am getting old and learning wisdom," answered Emmeline, making an effort to continue her playfulness, "and therefore admire quietness more than formerly."

"And therefore you are sometimes so silent and sad, to atone for the past," my Emmeline, remarked her mother, somewhat sorrowfully.

"Sad, nay, dearest mother, do me not injustice; I cannot be sad, when so many, many blessings are around me," replied the affectionate girl. "Silent I may be sometimes, but that is only because I do not feel quite so strong perhaps as I once did, and it appears an exertion to rattle on as I used upon trifling subjects.

"I shall not be contented, then, my own Emmeline, till that strength returns, and I hear you delighted, even as of old, with little things again."

"And yet you have sometimes smiled at my romance, and bade me think of self control, dearest mother. Must I be saucy enough to call you changeable?" answered Emmeline, smiling, as she looked in her mother's face.

Mrs. Hamilton was prevented replying by Ellen's delighted exclamation that it was her uncle's carriage, and Edward was waving a white handkerchief, as if impatient to reach them, an impatience which was speedily satisfied by his arrival, bounding into the room, but suddenly pausing at the door to permit his uncle and another gentleman's entrance, to which latter he

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respectfully raised his cap, and then sprung forward to clasp the extended hands of his cousin and sister.

"Allow me to congratulate you, madam," said Sir Edward Manly, after returning with easy politeness the courteous greeting of Mrs. Hamilton, "on the promotion of one of the bravest officers and most noble-minded youths of the British navy, and introduce all here present to Lieutenant Fortescue, of his Majesty's frigate the Royal Neptune, whose unconquered and acknowledged dominion over the seas I have not the very slightest doubt he will be one of the most eager to preserve."

"Nor can I doubt it, Sir Edward," replied Mrs. Hamilton, smiling, as she glanced on the flushing cheek of her gallant nephew, adding, as she held out her hand to him, "God bless you, my dear boy! I do indeed rejoice in your promotion, for I believe it well deserved."

"You are right, madam, it is well deserved," replied Sir Edward, with an accent so marked on the last sentence that the attention of all was arrested. "Hamilton, I have been silent to you on the subject, for I wished to speak it first before all those who are so deeply interested in this young man's fate. "The lad," he added, striking his hand frankly on Edward's shoulder, "the lad whose conscience shrunk from receiving public testimonials of his worth as a sailor, while his private character was stained, while there was that upon it which, if known, he believed would effectually prevent his promotion; who, at the risk of disappointment to his dearest wishes, of disgrace, want of honor, possessed sufficient courage to confess to his captain that his log-book, the first years of his seamanship, told a false tale—the lad, I say, who can so nobly command himself, is well worthy to govern others. He who has known so well the evil of disobedience will be firm in the discipline of his men, while he who is so stern to his own faults will, I doubt not, be charitable to those of others. The sword presented to him for his brave preservation of the crew of the Syren will never be stained by dishonor, while he looks upon it and remembers the past, and even as in those of my own son, shall I henceforward rejoice in using my best endeavors to promote the fortunes of Edward Fortescue."

The return of Edward, the honors he had received, the perfect happiness beaming on his bright face, all caused Ellen to look forward to the ball with greater pleasure than she had ever regarded gayety of that sort before; and Mrs. Hamilton would sometimes playfully declare that she and Emmeline

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had for a time exchanged characters, although Edward's never-failing liveliness, his odd tales and joyous laugh, had appeared partly to rouse the latter's usual spirits, and dissipate slightly her mother's anxiety.

The festive night arrived, and anticipation itself was not disappointed in the pleasure it bestowed. All the nobility of the country, for miles round, had assembled in respect to the royal guests who had honored the distinguished commander with their august presence; and Mrs. Hamilton's natural feelings of pride were indeed gratified that night, as she glanced on her Caroline, who now appeared in public for the first time since her marriage, attired in simple elegance, yet with a richness appropriate to her rank, attracting every eye, even that of their Royal Highnesses themselves, by the graceful dignity of her tall and commanding figure, by the quiet repose and polished ease which characterized her every movement. If Lord St. Eval looked proud of his young wife, there were few there who would have blamed him. The Lady Florence Lyle was with her brother, enjoying with unfeigned pleasure, as did Ellen, and to all appearance Emmeline, the scene before them.

The brilliant uniforms of the army, and the handsome, but less striking ones of the navy, imparted additional gayety and splendor to the rooms, forming picturesque groups, when contrasting with the chaste and elegant costumes of the fairer sex. But on the fascinating scene we may not linger, nor attempt to describe the happiness which the festivities occasioned the entire party, nor on the gratification of Lieutenant Fortescue, when Sir Edward Manly begged the honor of an introduction for his young friend to his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence, who, with his amiable consort, the Princess Adelaide, had honored Lord N—— with their august presence. Upon one incident alone we must be permitted to dwell, as affording a great and unexpected pleasure to our friend Ellen.

Edward and Ellen were for some time perfectly unconscious that they were objects of the most earnest, penetrating scrutiny of a lady, leaning on the arm of a young and handsome man in regimentals, near them.

"It must be them; that likeness cannot be that of a stranger," were the words, uttered in an earnest, persuading tone, addressed by the young officer to the lady, who might be his mother, which were the first to attract the attention of the little group, though the speaker appeared quite unconscious

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that he was overheard. "Let me speak to him, and at least ask the question."

"No, no, Walter," the lady replied, in a low tone "Changed as are our situations now, I could not wish, even if it be them, to intrude upon their remembrance."

An exclamation of suppressed impatience escaped from the lips of the young man, but instantly checking it, he said, respectfully and tenderly—

"Dearest mother, do not say so, if" (the name was lost,) "grew up as she was a child, she would be glad to welcome the friend of her father, the companion of her childhood."

"But it cannot be, Walter; that beautiful girl is not like my poor child, though her brother may strangely resemble those we have known."

"Have you not often told me, mother, we never change so much from childhood into youth? Ellen was always ill, now she may be well, and that makes all the difference in the world. I am much mistaken if those large, mournful eyes can belong to any but"—

He paused abruptly; for convinced that they must be the subject of conversation, and feeling they were listening to language not meant for their ears, Edward and Ellen turned towards the speakers, who to the former appeared perfect strangers, not so to the latter. Feelings, thoughts of her earliest infancy and childhood, came thronging over her as a spell, as she gazed on the lady's countenance, which, by its expression, denoted that sorrow had been her portion; it was changed, much changed from that which it had been; but the rush of memory on Ellen's young soul told her that face had been seen before. A night of horror and subsequent suffering flashed before her eyes, in which that face had beamed in fondness and in soothing kindness over her; that voice had spoken accents of love in times when even a mother's words were harsh and cold.

"Forgive me, sir, but is not your name Fortescue?" inquired the young man, somewhat hesitatingly, yet frankly, as he met Edward's glance.

"You have the advantage of me, sir," he replied, with equal frankness; "such is my name, but yours I cannot guess."

"I beg your pardon, but am I speaking to the son of Colonel Fortescue, who fell in India during a skirmish against the natives, nearly ten years ago?"

"The same, sir."

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"Then, it is—it is Mrs. Cameron; I am not, I knew I could not be mistaken," exclaimed Ellen, in an accent of delight, and bounding forward, she clasped the lady's eagerly extended hand in both hers, and gazing in her face with eyes glistening with starting tears. "And would you, could you have passed me, without one word to say my friend, the wife of my father's dearest friend, was so near to me? you who in my childhood so often soothed and tended my sufferings, dearest Mrs. Cameron?" and tears of memory and of feeling fell upon the hand she held, while young Cameron gazed on her with an admiration which utterly prevented his replying coherently to the questions, the reminiscences of former years, when they were playmates together in India, which Edward, discovering by his sister's exclamation who he was, was now pouring in his ear.

"I did not, could not think I should have been thus affectionately, thus faithfully remembered, my dear Ellen, after a lapse of so many years," replied Mrs. Cameron, visibly affected at her young companion's warmth. "I could not imagine the memory of a young child, such as you were when we parted, would have been so acute."

"Then my niece must have been all these years mistaken, and you too did not understand her, though she fancied you did," said Mrs. Hamilton, with a smile, advancing to relieve Ellen's agitation, which the association of her long lamented father with Mrs. Cameron rended almost painful. "I could have told you, from the moment she was placed under my care, that she never would forget those who had once been kind to her. I have known you so long, from Ellen's report, that glad am I indeed to make your acquaintance; you to whom my lamented sister was so much indebted."

Gratified and soothed by this address, for the sight of Ellen had awakened many sad associations, she too being now a widow, Mrs. Cameron rallied her energies, and replied to Mrs. Hamilton, in her naturally easy and friendly manner Ellen looked on the black dress she wore, and turned inquiringly to young Cameron, who answered hurriedly, for he guessed her thoughts.

"Ask not of my father, he is beside Colonel Fortescue; he shared his laurels and his grave."

An expression of deep sympathy passed over Ellen's countenance, rendering her features, to the eager glance of the young man, yet more attractive.

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"You have, I see, much to say and inquire, my dear Ellen," said her aunt, kindly, as she marked her flushed cheek and eager eye. "Perhaps Mrs. Cameron will indulge you by retiring with you into one of those quiet, little refreshment-rooms, where you can talk as much as you please without remark."

"Can I ask my dear young friend to resign the pleasures of the dance, and agreeable companionship of the friends I see thronging round her, to listen to an old woman's tale?" said Mrs. Cameron, smiling.

"I think you are answered," replied Mrs. Hamilton, playfully, as Ellen passed her arm through that of Mrs. Cameron, and looked caressingly and persuadingly in her face.

Mrs. Cameron's tale was soon told She had returned to England, for India had become painful to her, from the many bereavements which had there unhappily darkened her lot. Captain Cameron had fallen in an engagement, two or three years after Mrs. Fortescue's departure; and out of seven apparently healthy children, which had been hers when Ellen knew her, only three now remained. It was after the death of her eldest daughter, a promising girl of eighteen, her own health having suffered so exceedingly from the shock, that her son Walter, fearing for her life, effected an exchange, and being ordered to return with his regiment to England—for he now held his father's rank of captain—he succeeded in persuading his mother to accompany him with his sisters. He was quartered at Devonport, where it appeared they had been residing the last eight months, visited, even courted, by most of the military and naval officers who had known and respected his father; amongst whom was Lord N——, who had persuaded Mrs. Cameron to so far honor his ball as there to introduce her daughter Flora using arguments she could not resist, and consequently delighting her affectionate children by once more appearing in public.

"And this is Walter, the kind Walter, who used ever to take my part, though he did scold me for always looking so sad," exclaimed Ellen, after hearing her friend's tale, and answering all her questions concerning herself, looking up as she spoke on the young man, who had again joined them, and blushing with timidity at her boldness in thus speaking to one who had grown into a stranger.

The young man's heart throbbed as he heard himself addressed as Walter by the beautiful girl beside him; and he

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found it difficult to summon sufficient courage to ask her to dance with him; frankly, however, she consented.

Ellen found pleasure, also, in renewing acquaintance with the timid Flora, whom she had left a playful child of seven, and who was now merging into bright and beautiful girlhood; eager to return her kindly warmth, in the delight of finding one of her own age among that glittering crowd of strangers.

But few more incidents of note occurred that night; dancing continued with unabated spirit, even after the departure of the royal guests, and pleasure was the prevailing feeling to the last. The notice of the Duke, and the benignant spirit of the Duchess, her gentle and kindly manners, had penetrated many a young and ardent soul, and fixed at once and unwaveringly the stamp of future loyalty within.

Once introduced to Mrs. Cameron, and aware that she resided so near them, Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton cultivated her acquaintance; speedily they became intimate. In Mrs. Fortescue's broken and dying narrative, she had more than once mentioned them as the friends of her husband, and having been most kind to herself, Edward had alluded to Captain Cameron's care of him, and parting advice, when about to embark for England; and Ellen had frequently spoken of Mrs. Cameron's kindness to her when a child. All those who had shown kindness to her sister were objects of attraction to Mrs Hamilton, and the widow speedily became so attached to her and her amiable family, that, on Walter being suddenly ordered out to Ireland (which commands, by the way, the young man obeyed with very evident reluctance), she gladly consented to rent a small picturesque cottage between Woodlands and Oakwood, an arrangement which added much to the young people's enjoyment; while the quiet repose of her present life, the society of Mrs. Hamilton and her worthy husband, as also that of Mr. Howard, restored the widow to happiness, which had not been her portion since her husband's death; and now, for the first time, Mrs. Hamilton became acquainted with those minute particulars which she had for the last nine years desired to know, concerning the early childhood of those orphans then committed to her care. That her sister had been partial, it was very easy to discover; but the extent of the evil, and the many little trials Ellen's very infancy had to encounter, were only subjects of conjecture, for she could not bear to lead them to speak on any topic that might in the least have reflected on the memory of their mother.

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The intelligence therefore which she now obtained, explained all that had been a matter of mystery and surprise in Ellen's character, and rendered clearer than ever to Mrs. Hamilton the painful feelings which had in opening youth actuated her niece's conduct; and often, as she listened to Mrs. Cameron's account of her infant sufferings and her mother's harshness and neglect, did Mrs. Hamilton wish such facts had from the first been known to her; much sorrow, she felt assured, might have been spared to all. She would perchance have been enabled to have so trained her and soothed her early wounded sensibility, that all the wretchedness of her previous years might have been avoided; but she would not long allow her mind to dwell on such things. She looked on her niece as dearer than ever, from the narrative she had heard, and she was thankful to behold her thus in radiant health and beauty, and, she hoped, in happiness, although at times there was still a deeper shade of seriousness than she loved to see imprinted on her brow, and dimming the lustre of her eye, but it caused her no anxiety. Ellen's character had never been one of light-hearted glee; it would have been unnatural to see it now, and she believed that appearance of melancholy to be her natural disposition, and so too, perhaps, the orphan regarded it herself.

A very few weeks after Lord N—'s ball, Edward again departed from Oakwood to join his ship. He parted gayly with his friends, for he knew his voyage was to be but a short one; and that now the first and most toilsome step to promotion had been gained, he should have very many more opportunities of taking a run home and catching a glimpse, he said, joyously, of the whole crew who were so dear to him, on board that tough old ship Oakwood; and Ellen, too, could share his gayety even the night previous to his departure, for this was not like either their first or second parting. She had all to hope and but little to fear; for her trust was too firmly fixed on Him who had guarded that beloved brother through so many previous dangers and temptations, to bid her waver now. Even Mrs. Hamilton's anxious bosom trembled not as she parted from the son of her affections, the preserver of her husband; and though Oakwood felt dull and gloomy on the first departure of the mischief-loving, mirthful sailor, it was not the gloom of sorrow. February passed, and Mrs. Hamilton's solicitude with regard to Emmeline still continued. There were times when, deceived by her daughter's manner, lively and playful apparently as usual, she permitted herself to feel less

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anxious; but the pale cheek, the dulled eye, the air of lan guor, and sometimes, though not often, of depression which pervaded every movement, very quickly recalled anxiety and apprehension. Mr. Maitland could not understand her. If for a moment he imagined it was mental suffering, her manner was such the next time he saw her as entirely to baffle that fancy, and convince him that the symptoms which caused Mrs. Hamilton's alarm were, in reality, of no consequence. Determined to use every effort to deceive him, lest he should betray to her parents the real cause of her sufferings, Emmeline generally rallied every effort and rattled on with him, as from a child she had been accustomed, therefore it was no wonder the worthy surgeon was deceived; and often, very often, did the poor girl wish she could deceive herself as easily. It was now nearly three months since she and young Myrvin had so painfully parted, and her feelings, instead of diminishing in their intensity, appeared to become more powerful. She had hoped, by studiously employing herself, by never indulging in one idle hour, to partially efface his remembrance, but the effort was fruitless. The letters from Lady Florence and Lady Emily Lyle became subjects of feverish interest, for in them alone she heard unprejudiced accounts of Arthur, of whose praises, they declared, the epistles of their brother Louis were always full; so much so, Lady Emily said, that she certainly should fall in love with him, for the purpose of making a romantic story. Sadly did poor Emmeline feel there was but little romance in her feelings; cold, clinging despair had overcome her. She longed for the comfort of her mother's sympathy, but his character was not yet cleared. Mr. Hamilton evidently mistrusted the praises so lavishly bestowed on the young man by Lord Malvern's family; and how could she defend him, if accused of presumption towards herself? Presumption there had not been; indeed, his conduct throughout had done him honor. She fancied her mother would be displeased, might imagine she had encouraged the feeling of romantic admiration till it became an ideal passion, and made herself miserable. Perhaps an unknown, yet ever-lingering hope existed within, spite of despair, perhaps aerial visions would mingle in the darkness, and Emmeline shrunk, unconsciously, from their utter annihilation by the stern prohibition of her parents. Such was the constant tenor of her thoughts, but one moment of excited feeling betrayed that which she had deemed would never pass her lips.

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But a very few days had elapsed since Edward's departure from Oakwood, when, one afternoon, Mr. Hamilton entered the usual sitting-room of the family, apparently much disturbed. Mrs. Hamilton and Ellen were engaged in work, and Emmeline sat at a small table in the embrasure of one of the deep Gothic windows, silently yet busily employed it seemed in drawing. She knew her father had gone that morning to the village, and as usual felt uneasy and feverish, fearing, reasonably or unreasonably, that on his return she would hear something unpleasant concerning Arthur; as she this day marked the countenance of her father, her heart throbbed, and her cheek, which had been flushed by the action of stooping, paled even unto death.

"What mishap has chanced in the village, that you look so grave, my dear love?" demanded his wife, playfully.

"I am perplexed in what manner to act, and grieved, deeply grieved, at the intelligence I have learned; not only that my prejudice is confirmed, but the knowledge I have acquired concerning that unhappy young man places me in a most awkward situation."

"You are not speaking very intelligibly, my dear husband, and therefore I must guess what you mean; I fear it is young Myrvin of whom you speak," said Mrs. Hamilton, her playfulness gone.

"They surely have not been again bringing him forward to his discredit?" observed Ellen, earnestly. "The poor young man is far away; why will they still endeavor to prejudice you and Mr. Howard against him?"

"I admire your charity, my dear girl, but, I am sorry to say, in this case it is unworthily bestowed. There are facts now come to light which, I fear, unpleasant as will be the task, render it my duty to write to Lord Malvern. Arthur Myrvin is no fit companion for his son."

"His poor, poor father!" murmured Ellen, dropping her work, and looking sorrowfully, yet inquiringly, in her uncle's face.

"But are they facts, Arthur—are they proved? for that there is an unjust prejudice against him in the village, I am pretty certain."

"They are so far proved, that, by applying them to him, a mystery in the village is cleared up, and also his violent haste to quit our neighborhood. You remember Mary Brookes?"

"That poor girl who died, it was said, of such a rapid decline? Perfectly well."

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"It was not a decline, my dear Emmeline; would that it had been. She was beautiful, innocent, in conversation and manner far above her station. There are many to say she loved, and believed, in the fond trust of devotion, all that the tempter said. She was worthy to be his wife, and she became his victim. His visits to her old grandmother's cottage I myself know were frequent. He deserted her, and that wild agony broke the strings of life which remorse had already loosened; ten days after Myrvin quitted the village she died, giving birth to an unhappy child of sin and sorrow. Her grandmother, ever dull in observation and sense, has been silent, apparently stupefied by the sudden death of her Mary, and cherishes the poor helpless infant left her by her darling. Suddenly she has appeared awakened to indignation, and a desire of vengeance on the destroyer of her child, which I could wish less violent. She implored me, with almost frantic wildness, to obtain justice from the cruel villain—accusing him by name, and bringing forward so many proofs, which the lethargy of grief had before concealed, that I cannot doubt for one moment who is the father of that poor babe—the cruel, the heartless destroyer of innocence and life."

"But is there no evidence but hers? I wish there were, for Dame Williams is so weak and dull, she may easily be imposed upon," observed Mrs. Hamilton, thoughtfully. "It is indeed a tale of sorrow; one that I could wish, if it indeed be true, might not be published; for did it reach his father's ears"—

"It will break his heart, I know it will," interrupted Ellen, with an uncontrolled burst of feeling "Oh, do not condemn him without further proofs," she added, appealingly.

"Every inquiry I have made confirms the old dame's story," replied Mr. Hamilton, sadly. "We know Myrvin's life in college, before his change of rank, was one of reckless gayety. All say he was more often at Dame Williams's cottage than at any other. Had he been more attentive to his duties, we might have believed he sought to soothe by religion poor Mary's suffering, but we know such was not his wont. Jefferies corroborates the old dame's tale, bringing forward circumstances he had witnessed, too forcibly to doubt. And does not his hasty resignation of a comfortable home, a promising living, evince his guilt more strongly than every other proof? Why did he refuse to defend his conduct? Was it not likely such a crime as this upon his conscience would

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occasion that restlessness we all perceived, that extreme haste to depart? he would not stay to see his victim die, or be charged with a child of sin. There was a mystery in his sudden departure, but there is none now; it is all too clear."

"*It is false!*" burst with startling, almost overwhelming power from the lips of Emmeline, as she sprung with the strength of agony from her seat, and stood with the suddenness of a vision, before her parents, a bright hectic spot burning on either cheek, rendering her usually mild eyes painfully brilliant. She had sat as if spell-bound, drinking in every word. She *knew* the tale was false, but yet each word had fallen like brands of heated iron on her already scorching brain; that they should dare to breathe such a tale against him, whose fair fame she knew was unstained, link his pure name with infamy; and her father, too, believed it. She did not scream, though there was that within which longed for such relief. She did not faint, though every limb had lost its power. A moment's strength and energy alike returned, and she bounded forward. "It is false!" she again exclaimed, and her parents started in alarm at her agonized tone; "false as the false villain that dared stain the fair fame of another with his own base crime. Arthur Myrvin is not the father of that child; Arthur Myrvin was not the destroyer of Mary Brookes. Go and ask Nurse Langford: she who hung over poor Mary's dying bed; who received from her own cold lips the name of the father of her child; she who was alone near her when she died. Ask her, and she will tell you the wretch, who has prejudiced all minds against the good, the pure, the noble; the villain, the cruel despicable villain, who rested not till his base arts had ruined the—the—virtuous; that Jefferies, the canting hypocrite, the wretched miscreant, who has won all hearts because he speaks so fair, he, he alone is guilty. Put the question to him; let Nurse Langford ask him if the dying spoke falsely, when she named him, and his guilt will be written on his brow. Arthur Myrvin did visit that cottage; Mary had confessed a crime, she said not what, and implored his prayers; he soothed her bodily and mental sufferings, he robbed death of its terrors, and his only grief at leaving the village was, that she would miss his aid, for that crime could not be confessed to another; and they dare to accuse him of sin, he who is as good, as pure, as—" For one second she paused, choked by inward agony, but ere either her father or mother could address her, she continued, in an even wilder tone,—"Why

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did Arthur Myrvin leave this neighborhood? why did he go hence so suddenly—so painfully? because, because he loved me—because he knew that I returned his love, and he saw the utter hopelessness that surrounded us, and he went forth to do his duty; he left me to forget him, to obtain peace in the forgetfulness of one, I may never see again—forgetfulness! oh, not till my brain ceases to throb will that be mine. He thought to leave me with his love unspoken, but the words came, and that very hour we parted. He loved me, he knew I could not be his, and it was for this his living was resigned, for this he departed; and had he cause to blush for this? pure, honorable, as was his love, too noble, too unselfish to urge aught that could bid Emmeline forget her duty to her parents for love of him; bearing every calumny, even the prejudice, the harshness of my father, rather than confess he loved me. He is innocent of every charge that is brought against him—all, all, save the purest, the most honorable love for me; and, oh, is that indeed, indeed a crime?"

She had struggled to the very last to speak calmly, but now sobs, the more convulsive because the more suppressed, rose choking in her throat, and rendered the last words almost inaudible. She pressed both hands against her heart and then her temples, as if to still their painful throbbings, and speak yet more, but the effort was fruitless, and she darted wildly, and fled as an arrow from the room.

Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton looked on each other in painful and alarmed astonishment, and Ellen, deeply affected, rose hastily, as if with the intention of following her agitated cousin, but her aunt and uncle entreated her not, alleging Emmeline would sooner recover alone, asking her at the same time if she had known any thing relative to the confession they had just heard. She answered truly in the negative. Emmeline had scarcely ever spoken of young Myrvin in her hearing; but as the truth was now discovered, many little instances rose to the recollection of both parents to confirm the avowal of their child, and increase their now painfully awakened solicitude. Her agitation the night of Edward's return, when Lord St. Eval laughingly threatened her with marriage, rose to the recollection of both parents; her extreme excitement and subsequent depression; her visibly failing health since Arthur's departure, all, all, too sadly confirmed her words, and bitterly Mrs. Hamilton reproached herself for never having suspected the truth before, for permitting the young man to be thus inti

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mate at her house, heedless of what might ensue, forgetful that Emmeline was indeed no longer a child, that her temperament was one peculiarly liable to be thus strongly excited.

For a few minutes Mr. Hamilton felt pride and anger struggling fiercely in his bosom against Arthur, for having dared to love one so far above him as his child, but very quickly his natural kindliness and charity resumed their sway. Could he wonder at that love for one so fond, so gentle, so clinging, as his Emmeline? Would he not have deemed Arthur cold and strange, had her charms indeed passed him unnoticed and unfelt? he remembered the forbearance, the extreme temper the unhappy young man had ever displayed toward him, and suddenly and unconsciously he felt, he must have done him wrong; he had been prejudiced, misguided. If Nurse Langford's tale was right, and Jefferies had dared to accuse another of the crime he had himself committed, might he not in the like manner have prejudiced the whole neighborhood against Arthur by false reports? But while from the words of his child every kindly feeling rose up in the young man's favor, Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton did not feel the less painfully that Emmeline had indeed spoken rightly; hopelessness was her lot. It seemed to both impossible that they could ever consent to behold her the wife of Myrvin, even if his character were cleared of the stigmas which had been cast upon it. Could they consent to expose their fragile child, nursed as she had been, in the lap of luxury and comfort, to all the evils and annoyances of poverty? They had naturally accustomed themselves to anticipate Emmeline's marrying happily in their own sphere, and they could not thus suddenly consent to the annihilation of hopes, which had been fondly cherished in the mind of each.

Some little time they remained in conversation, and then Mrs. Hamilton rose to seek the chamber of her suffering child, taking with her indeed but little comfort, save her husband's earnest assurance that he would leave no means untried to discover Jefferies' true character, and if indeed Arthur had been accused unjustly.

It was with a trembling hand Mrs. Hamilton softly opened Emmeline's door, and with a heart bleeding at the anguish she beheld, and which she felt too truly she could not mitigate, she entered, and stood for several minutes by her side unnoticed and unseen.

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There are some dispositions in which it is acutely painful to witness sorrow. Those whom we have ever seen radiant in health, in liveliness, in joy—so full of buoyancy and hope, they seem as if formed for sunshine alone, as if they could not live in the darkening clouds of woe or care; whose pleasures have been pure and innocent as their own bright beauty; who are as yet unknown to the whisperings of inwardly working sin; full of love and gentleness, and sympathy, ever ready to weep for others, though for themselves tears are unknown; creatures, whose warm enthusiastic feelings bind them to every heart capable of generous emotions; those in whom we see life most beautified, most glad. Oh, it is so sad to see them weep; to feel that even on them sorrow hath cast its blight, and paled the cheek, and dimmed the laughing eye, the speaking smile, and the first grief in such as these is agony indeed; it is the breaking asunder of every former joy. They shrink from retrospection, for they cannot bear to feel they are not now as then, and the future shares to them the blackened shadows of the hopeless present. As susceptible as they are to pleasure so are they to pain; and raised far above others in the enjoyment of the one, so is their grief doubled in comparison with those of more happy, because more even temperaments. So it was with Emmeline; and her mother felt all this as she stood beside her, watching with tearful sympathy the first real grief of her darling child. Emmeline had cast herself on her knees beside her couch; she had buried her face in her hands, while the sobs that burst incessantly from her swelling bosom shook her frail figure convulsively, the blue veins in her throat had swelled as if in suffocation, and her fair hair, loosened from its confinement by her agitation, hung wildly around her.

"Emmeline," Mrs. Hamilton said, gently and falteringly, but her child heard her not, and she twined her arm around her, and tried to draw her towards her.

"My own darling Emmeline, speak to me; I cannot bear to see you thus. Look up, love; for my sake calm this excited feeling."

"May I not even weep? Would you deny me that poor comfort?" burst almost passionately from the lips of Emmeline, for every faculty was bewildered in that suddenly excited woe. She looked up; her eyes were bloodshot and haggard, her cheek flushed, and the veins drawn like cords across her brow.

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"Weep: would your mother forbid you that blessed comfort and relief, my Emmeline. Could you indeed accuse me of such cruelty?" replied Mrs. Hamilton, bending over her as she spoke, and removing from those flushed temples the hair which hung heavy with moisture upon them, and as she did so, Emmeline felt the tears of her mother fall thick and fast on her own scorching brow. She started from her knees, gazed wildly and doubtingly upon her, and tottering from exhaustion, would have fallen, had not Mrs. Hamilton, with a sudden movement, received her in her arms. For a moment Emmeline struggled as if to break from her embrace, but then, with a sudden transition of feeling, clasped her arms convulsively about her mother's neck, and burst into a long and violent but relieving flood of tears.

"I meant never, never to have revealed my secret," she exclaimed, in a voice almost inaudible, as her mother, seating her on a couch near them, pressed her to her heart, and permitted some minutes to pass away in that silence of sympathy which to the afflicted is so dear. "And now that it has been wrung from me, I know not what I do or say. Oh, if I have spoken aught disrespectfully to you or papa just now, I meant it not, indeed I did not; but they dared to speak false tales, and I could not sit calmly to hear them," she added, shuddering.

"There was nothing in your words, my own love, to give us pain with regard to ourselves," said Mrs. Hamilton, in her most soothing tone, as again and again she pressed her quivering lips to that flushed cheek, and tried to kiss away the now streaming tears. "Do not let that thought add to your uneasiness, my own darling."

"And can you forgive me, mother?" and Emmeline buried her face yet more closely in her mother's bosom.

"Forgive you, Emmeline! is there indeed aught in your acquaintance with Arthur Myrvin which demands my forgiveness?" replied her mother, in a tone of anxiety and almost alarm.

"Oh, no, no! but you may believe I have encouraged these weak emotions; that I have wilfully thought on them till I have made myself thus miserable; that I have called for his love—given him encouragement: indeed, indeed I have not. I have struggled hard to obtain forgetfulness—to think of him no more, to regain happiness, but it would not come. I feel—I know I can never, never be again the joyous light-hearted girl that I was once; all feels so changed."

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"Do not say so, my own love; this is but the language of despondency, now too naturally your own: but permit it not to gain too much ascendency, dearest. Where is my Emmeline's firm, devoted faith in that merciful Father, who for so many years has gilded her lot with such unchecked happiness. Darker clouds are now indeed for a time around you, but His blessing will remove them, love; trust still in Him."

Emmeline's convulsive sobs were somewhat checked; the fond and gentle tones of sympathy had their effect on one to whom affection never pleaded in vain.

"And why have you so carefully concealed the cause of the sufferings that were so clearly visible, my Emmeline?" continued her mother, tenderly. "Could that fear which you once avowed in a letter to Mary, have mingled in your affection for me? Could fear, indeed, have kept you silent? Can your too vivid fancy have bid you imagine I should reproach you, or refuse my sympathy in this sad trial? Your perseverance in active employments, your strivings for cheerfulness, all must, indeed, confirm your assertion, that you have not encouraged weakening emotions. I believe you, my own, and I believe, too, my Emmeline did not give young Myrvin encouragement. Look up, love, and tell me that you do not fear your mother—that you do not deem her harsh."

"Harsh? oh, no, no!" murmured the poor girl, still clinging to her neck, as if she feared something would part them. "It is I who am capricious, fanciful, miserable; oh, do not heed my incoherent words. Mother, dearest mother, oh, let me but feel that you still love me, and I will teach my heart to be satisfied with that."

"But if indeed I am not harsh, tell me all, my Emmeline—tell me when you were first aware you loved Arthur Myrvin, all that has passed between you. I promise you I will not add to your suffering on his account by reproaches. Confide in the affection of your mother, and this trial will not be so hard to bear."

Struggling to obtain composure and voice, Emmeline obeyed, and faithfully repeated every circumstance connected with her and Arthur, with which our readers are well acquainted; touching lightly, indeed, on their parting interview, which Mrs. Hamilton easily perceived could not be recalled even now, though some months had passed without a renewal of the distress it caused. Her recital almost unconsciously exalted the character of Arthur in the mind of Mrs. Hamilton,

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which was too generous and kind to remain untouched by conduct so honorable, forbearing, and praiseworthy.

"Do not weep any more for the cruel charges against him, my love," she said, with soothing tenderness, as Emmeline's half-checked tears burst forth again as she spoke of the agony she in secret endured, when in her presence his character was traduced. "Your father will now leave no means untried to discover whether indeed they are true or false. Insinuations and reports have prejudiced his judgment more than is his wont. He has gone now to Widow Langford, to hear her tale against Jefferies, and if this last base charge he has brought against Arthur be indeed proved against himself, it will be easy to convict him of other calumnies; for the truth of this once made evident, it is clear that his base machinations have been the secret engines of the prejudice against Myrvin, for which no clear foundation has ever yet been discovered. You will not doubt your father's earnestness in this proceeding, my Emmeline, and you know him too well to believe that he would for one moment refrain from acknowledging to Mr. Myrvin the injustice he has done him, if indeed it prove unfounded."

"And if his character be cleared from all stain—if not a whisper taint his name, and his true excellence be known to all—oh, may we not hope? mother, mother, you will not be inexorable; you will not, oh, you will not condemn your child to misery?" exclaimed Emmeline, in a tone of excitement, strongly contrasting with the hopelessness which had breathed in every word before; and, bursting from her mother's detaining hold, she suddenly knelt before her, and clasped her robe in the wildness of her entreaty. "You will not refuse to make us happy; you will not withhold your consent, on which alone depends the future happiness of your Emmeline. You, who have been so good, so kind, so fond,—oh, you will not sentence me to woe. Mother, oh, speak to me. I care not how many years I wait: say, only say, that if his character be cleared of all they have dared to cast upon it, I shall one day be his. Do not turn from me, mother. Oh, bid me not despond; and yet, and yet, because he is poor, oh, would you, can you condemn me to despair?"

"Emmeline, Emmeline, do not wring my heart by these cruel words," replied Mrs. Hamilton, in a tone of such deep distress, that Emmeline's imploring glance sunk before it, and feeling there was indeed no hope, her weakened frame shook

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with the effort to restrain the bursting tears. "Do not ask me to promise this; do not give me the bitter pain of speaking that which you feel at this moment will only add to your unhappiness. You yourself, by the words you have repeated, behold the utter impossibility of such a union. Why, why then will you impose on me the painful task of repeating it? Could I consent to part with you to one who has not even a settled home to give you, whose labors scarcely earn sufficient to maintain himself? You know not all the evils of such a union, my sweet girl. You are not fitted to cope with poverty or care, to bear with that passionate irritability and restlessness which characterize young Myrvin, even when weightier charges are removed. And could we feel ourselves justified in exposing you to privations and sorrows, which our cooler judgment may perceive, though naturally concealed from the eye of affection? Seldom, very seldom, are those marriages happy in which such an extreme disparity exists, more particularly when, as in this case, the superiority is on the side of the wife. I know this sounds like cold and worldly reasoning, my Emmeline; I know that this warm, fond heart revolts in agony from every word, but do not, do not think me cruel, love, and shrink from my embrace. How can I implore you, for my sake, still to struggle with these sad feelings, to put every effort into force to conquer this unhappy love? and yet my duty bids me do so; for, oh, I cannot part with you for certain poverty and endless care. Speak to me, my own; promise me that you will try and be contented with your father's exertions to clear Arthur's character from all aspersions. You will not ask for more?"

There was a moment's pause. Mrs. Hamilton had betrayed in every word the real distress she suffered in thus speaking, when the gentle pleading of her woman's heart would have bade her soothe by any and every means her afflicted child; Emmeline knew this, and even in that moment she could not bear to feel her mother grieved, and she had been the cause. Filial devotion, filial duty, for a few minutes struggled painfully with the fervid passion which shook her inmost soul; but they conquered, and when she looked up, her tears were checked, and only the deadly paleness of the cheek, the quivering of the lip and eye, betrayed the deep emotion that still prevailed within.

"Be not thus distressed for me, my dear, my too indulgent mother," replied Emmeline, in a voice that struggled to be

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composed and firm, though bodily weakness defied her efforts. "I meant not to have grieved you, and yet I have done so. Oh, let not my foolish words give you pain, you whose love would, I know, seek to spare me every suffering. My brain feels confused and burning now, and I know not what I say; but it will pass away soon, and then I will try to be all you can wish. You will not, I know you will not be so cruel as to bid me wed another, and that knowledge is enough. Let but his character be cleared, and I promise you I will use every effort to be content. I knew that it was hopeless. Why, oh, why did I bid your lips confirm it!" and again were those aching eyes and brow concealed on Mrs. Hamilton's shoulder, while the despairing calmness of her voice sounded even more acutely painful to her mother than the extreme suffering it had expressed before.

"May God in His mercy bless you for this, my darling girl!" escaped almost involuntarily from Mrs. Hamilton's lips, as the sweet disposition of her child appeared to shine forth brighter than ever in this complete surrender of her dearest hopes to the will of her parents. "And oh, that He may soothe and comfort you will mingle in your mother's prayers. Tell me but one thing more, my own. Have you never heard from this young man since you parted?"

"He wrote to me, imploring me to use my influence with St. Eval, to aid his obtaining the situation of tutor to Lord Louis," answered Emmeline. "He did not allude to what had passed between us; his letter merely contained this entreaty, as if he would thus prove to me that his intention to quit England, and seek for calmness in the steady performance of active duties, was not mere profession."

"Then your representations were the origin of Eugene's interest in Arthur?" said Mrs. Hamilton, inquiringly.

Emmeline answered in the affirmative.

"And did you answer his letter?"

"No, mamma; it was enough for me and for him, too, his wishes were granted. I would not indulge my secret wish to do so. Neither you nor papa, nor indeed any of my family, knew what had passed between us. Determined as I was to struggle for the conquest of myself, I did not imagine in keeping that secret I was acting undutifully; but had I written to him, or cherished, as my weak fondness bade me do, his—his—why should I hide it—his precious letter, my conscience would have added its pangs to the sufferings already mine. While

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that was free and light, I could still meet your look and smile, and return your kiss, however I might feel my heart was breaking; but if I had so deceived you, so disregarded my duty, as to enter into a correspondence with him, unknown to you, oh, the comfort of your love would have flown from me for ever."

"And had my Emmeline indeed sufficient resolution to destroy that letter?" demanded Mrs. Hamilton, surprise mingling with the admiration and esteem, which, though felt by a mother for a child, might well be pardoned.

"It was my duty, mother, and I did it," replied Emmeline, with a simplicity that filled the eyes of her mother with tears. "Could I indeed forget those principles of integrity which, from my earliest infancy, you have so carefully instilled?"

Mrs. Hamilton clasped her to her bosom, and imprinted kisses of the fondest affection on her colorless and burning forehead.

"Well, indeed, are my cares repaid," she exclaimed. "Oh, that my affection could soothe your sorrows as sweetly as your gentle yet unwavering adherence to filial love and duty have comforted me. Will you, for my sake, my own love, continue these painful yet virtuous efforts at self-conquest, which you commenced merely from a sense of duty? Will you not glad your mother's heart, and let me have the comfort of beholding you once more my own cheerful, happy Emmeline?"

"I will try," murmured Emmeline, struggling to smile; but oh, it was so unlike herself, so lustreless and faint, that Mrs. Hamilton hastily turned away to hide emotion. The dressing-bell at that instant sounded, and Emmeline looked an entreaty to which her lips appeared unwilling to give words. Her mother understood it.

"I will not ask you to join us at dinner, love. Do not look so beseechingly, you will recover this agitation sooner and better alone; and so much confidence have you compelled me to feel in you," she added, trying to smile and speak playfully, "that I will not ask you to make an exertion to which you do not feel equal, even if you wish to be alone the whole evening. I know my Emmeline's solitary moments will not be spent in vain repinings."

"You taught me whom to seek for comfort and relief in my childish sorrows, and I will not, I do not forget that lesson now, mother," answered Emmeline, faintly yet ex-

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pressively. "Let me be alone, indeed, a few hours, and if I can but conquer this feeling of exhaustion, I will join you at tea."

Mrs. Hamilton silently embraced and left her, with a heart swelling with fond emotion, as she thought on the gentle yet decided character of her child, who from her infancy had scarcely ever caused her pain, still less anxiety. Now indeed solicitude was hers, for it was evident, alas! too evident, that Emmeline's affections were unalterably engaged; that this was not the mere fervor of the moment, a passion that would pass away with the object, but one that Mrs. Hamilton felt forebodingly would still continue to exist. Emmeline's was not a disposition to throw off feelings such as these lightly and easily. Often had her mother inwardly trembled when she thought of such a sentiment influencing her Emmeline, and now the dreaded moment had come. How was she to act? She could not consent to a union such as this would be. Few mothers possessed less ambition than Mrs. Hamilton, few were so indulgent, so devoted to her children, but to comply with the poor girl's feverish wishes would be indeed but folly. Arthur had engaged himself to remain with Lord Louis Lyle during the period of his residence in Germany, which was at that time arranged to be three years. The future to young Myrvin must, she knew, be a blank; years would in all probability elapse ere he could obtain an advantageous living and means adequate to support a wife and family; and would it not be greater cruelty to bid Emmeline live on in lingering and sickening hope, than at once to appeal to her reason, and entreat her, by the affection she bore her parents, to achieve this painful conquest of herself, as their consent could not be given. They felt sad, indeed, thus to add to the suffering of their afflicted child, yet it was the better way, for had they promised to consent that, when he could support her, she should be his own, it might indeed bring relief for the moment, but it would be but the commencement of a life of misery; her youth would fade away in that sickening anguish of hope deferred, more bitter because more lingering than the absolute infliction of brief though certain suffering. The hearts of both parents grieved as they thought on all she had endured, and for a brief period must still endure, but their path of duty once made clear, they swerved not from it, however it might pain themselves.

Mrs. Hamilton was right. Emmeline's solitary moments

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were not spent in vain repinings: she struggled to compose her thoughts, to cast the burden of her sorrows upon Him, who in love and mercy had ordained them; and she did so with that pure, that simple, beautiful faith so peculiarly her own, and a calm at length stole over her wearied spirit and exhausted frame, soothing her, even to sleep, with the words of prayer yet lingering on her lips. She awoke, after above an hour's slumber, composed in mind, but still feverish in body. Prayer had brought its blessed influence, but that calm was more the quiescence proceeding from over-excitement than natural feeling; she felt it so, and dreaded the return of mental agony, as bodily sufferers await the periodical paroxysms of pain. She resolved not to give way to the exhaustion she still felt. She rejoined the family at tea, pale indeed, but perfectly composed, and even faintly smiling on her father, who, hastily rising as she languidly and unexpectedly entered the room, carried her tenderly in his arms to a couch, compelled her to lie down, and bending over her with that soothing fondness which she so much loved, retained his seat by her side all the evening, though participating and frequently inducing her to join in the conversation on various topics, which Mrs. Hamilton and Ellen seemed determined to maintain. Once during that evening Emmeline had looked up beseechingly in her father's face, and that touching, silent eloquence told all she would have said, far more expressively than works.

"Justice shall be done, my Emmeline," he replied, gently drawing her to him, and speaking in a tone that was heard by her alone. "I have been harsh, prejudiced, as cruelly unjust as blindly imposed on by a comparative stranger; but I promise you, all shall be impartially considered. I have done this unfortunate young man much wrong, for I should have recollected his father has many enemies, and this may be one of them, seeking from revenge to injure him. I am grateful to Arthur Myrvin for his forbearance towards myself, for his truly noble conduct towards you—right principles alone could have dictated both. Mrs. Langford has confirmed all you said, and informed me of many little circumstances which if, on a strict examination, I find are founded on truth, Jefferies' character and base designs will not be difficult to fathom. Myrvin's character shall be cleared from suspicion, if it be in my power, my dear girl; rest as confident on my promise to that effect, as I do on yours, that, this accomplished, *you will ask no more.*"

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Emmeline's head rested on his shoulder; he had marked the relief, the gratitude her sweet face expressed during his first words, but as he ceased, her eyes were hid upon his bosom, and he could read no more. It was well for the steadiness of his determination that it was so, for the wretchedness imprinted on every feature, every line of her countenance, at his concluding sentence, would have wrung his soul.

Though persuaded by her parents to retire early, Emmeline did not do so till the usual hour of separation after prayers. To Ellen's silently-observing eye she appeared to shrink from being alone, and this thought haunted her so incessantly, that, instead of composing herself to rest, she softly traversed the short distance which separated their apartments, and entered her cousin's room.

Emmeline was alone, undressed, a large wrapping robe flung carelessly over her night attire, but instead of reading, which at that hour, and in that guise, she generally did, that the word of God might be the last book on which she looked ere she sought her rest, she was leaning abstractedly over the fire, seated on a low stool, her hands pressed on her temples, while the flickering flame cast a red and unnatural glare on those pale cheeks. Ellen advanced, but her cousin moved not at her entrance, nor even when she knelt by her side, and twined her arms around her.

"Will you not go to bed, dearest Emmeline? it is so late, and you have been so fearfully agitated to-day. Look up and speak to me, my own dear cousin, or I shall fancy you are hurt with me for permitting so many hours to pass without coming near you, when I knew you were in suffering. Oh, you know not how I longed to come, but my aunt said you had entreated to be left alone. I stood for some minutes by your door, but all was so still, I thought I should disturb you did I enter. You do not accuse me of unkindness, Emmeline?"

Roused by her cousin's affectionate words and imploring voice, Emmeline resisted not her embrace, but clung to her in silence.

"You are ill, you are very ill, dearest, dearest Emmeline; do not sit up thus; for my sake, for your mother's sake, try if sleep will not ease this aching head," exclaimed Ellen, much alarmed at the burning heat and quick throbbing of Emmeline's forehead, as it rested on her shoulder.

"I cannot sleep, Ellen, it is useless to attempt it; I feel

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as if my eyes would never close again; as if years had passed over my head since last night. I thought I could not be more miserable than I was when—when we parted, and as I have been since; but that was nothing—nothing to this. I thought I had not indulged in hope, for I knew that it was vain, but now, now I feel I must have done so, and it is its utter, utter annihilation that bows me to the earth. Oh, why am I so changed, I who was once so glad, so free, so full of hope and happiness, looking forward to days as bright as those that fled; and now what am I, and what is life? a thing from which all happiness has flown, but clothed in darker shadows, from its contrast with the past."

"Oh, do not say so, dearest," replied Ellen, affected almost to tears, by the desparing tone in which these words were said. "The blessing, the comfort of your parents, your brothers, of all who know you, as you are, do not say your life will be without joy; its most cherished flower, its most precious gem may have passed away, but others will spring up in time, to fill that yearning void. You, whose presence ever brings with it such enjoyment to others, oh, you too will be blessed. You cannot long continue miserable, when you feel the power you have of making so many of your fellow-creatures happy. You are ill, exhausted now, and therefore all around you looks so full of gloom and pain, yet when this shall have passed, you will not reject the comfort that remains. Have you not an approving conscience to support you, the consciousness that you have proved your love and gratitude to the parents you so fondly love? and think you He, who looks with an eye of favor on the faintest effort of his creatures, made for His sake, and in His spirit, will permit this strength to pass unaided? No, dearest, He will assist and strengthen you; He can take even from this bitter trial its sting."

"I know it, I feel it," murmured Emmeline, still clinging to her cousin, as if she found comfort in her presence and her words. "I know well that this trial in itself is as nothing compared with those endured at this very hour by thousands of my fellow-creatures, and knowing this makes me the more wretched, for if I am thus repining and miserable, how dare I hope my prayers will be heard?"

"Yet doubt it not, my own Emeline; our Father in heaven judgeth not as man judgeth. Man might condemn this appearance of weakness in you now, but God will not for he knows the individual strength of His creatures, and in

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love and mercy chasteneth accordingly. He knoweth this is a severe trial for one, young and gentle as you are; and with your heart lifted up to Him, as I know it is, doubt not that your prayers will be heard and this pang softened in His own time. I fear my words sound cold; but oh, would that I could comfort you, dearest," and tears stood trembling in Ellen's eyes.

"And you do comfort me, Ellen; oh, I do not feel so very wretched with you near me as I do alone, though even you cannot guess this extent of suffering; you know not what it is to love, and yet to feel there is no hope; no—none," she repeated in a low murmuring tone, as if to convince herself that there was indeed none, as she had said; and it was not strange that thus engrossed, she marked not that a slight shudder passed through her cousin's frame at her last words; that Ellen's cheek suddenly vied in its deadly paleness with her own; that the tears dried up, as if frozen in those large, dark eyes, which were fixed upon her with an expression she would, had she seen it, have found difficult to understand; that the pale lip quivered for a few minutes, so as entirely to prevent her speaking as she had intended.

"Go to bed, dearest Emmeline, indeed you must not sit up longer," Ellen said at length, as she folded her arms fondly round her and kissed her cheek. "When I was ill, you ever wished to dictate to me," she continued, playfully, "and I was always good and obedient; will you not act up to your own principle and obey me now? think of your mother, dearest, how anxious she will be if you are ill. I will not leave you till you are asleep."

"No, no, dear Ellen, I will not so abuse your kindness; I will go to bed. I have been wrong to sit up thus, when I promised mamma to do all I could to—but, indeed, you must not stay with me, Ellen. I feel so exhausted, I may perhaps sleep sooner than I expect; but even if I do not, you must not sit up."

"Never mind, my love, let me see you obedient, and I will perhaps learn the same lesson," replied Ellen, playfully, though her cheek retained its suddenly-acquired paleness. Emmeline no longer resisted, and Ellen quickly had the relief of seeing her in bed, and her eyes closed, as if in the hope of obtaining sleep; but after a few minutes they again opened, and seeing Ellen watching her, she said—

"You had better leave me, Ellen, I shall not be able to sleep

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if I think you are watching me, and losing your own night's rest. I am not ill, my dear cousin, I am only miserable, and that will pass away perhaps for a short time again, as it did this afternoon."

Ellen again kissed her and closed the curtains, obeying her so far as to retire to her room, but not to bed; she was much too uneasy to do so. Emmeline had been in very delicate health for some months, and it appeared to her observant eyes and mind, that now the cause for her exertion was removed, by the discovery of her long-treasured secret, that health had really given way, and she was actually ill in body as well as mind. The burning heat of her forehead and hand, the quick pulsation of her temples, had alarmed her as predicting fever; and Ellen, with that quiet resolution and prompt decision, which now appeared to form such prominent traits in her character, determined on returning to her cousin's room as soon as she thought she had fallen asleep, and remain there during the night; that if she were restless, uneasy, or wakeful, she might, by her presence, be some comfort, and if these feverish symptoms continued, be in readiness to send for Mr. Maitland at the first dawn of morning, without alarming her aunt.

"You are not formed for sorrow, my poor Emmeline," she said internally, as she prepared herself for her night's visit by assuming warmer clothing. "Oh, that your grief may speedily pass away; I cannot bear to see one so formed for joy as you are grieved. My own sorrows I can bear without shrinking, without disclosing by one sign what I am internally suffering. I have been nerved from my earliest years to trial, and it would be strange indeed did I not seem as you believe me. *I* know not what it is to love. *I* know not the pang of that utter hopelessness which bows my poor cousin to the earth. Ah, Emmeline, you know not such *hopelessness* as mine, gloomy as are your prospects; you can claim the sympathy, the affection, the consolation, of all those who are dear to you; there is no need to hide your love, ill-fated as it is, for it is *returned*—you are beloved; and I, my heart must bleed in secret, for no such mitigation attends its loss of peace. I dare not seek for sympathy, or say I love: but why—why am I encouraging these thoughts?" and she started as if some one could have heard her scarcely audible soliloquy. "It is woman's lot to suffer—man's is to *act*, woman's to *bear;* and such must be mine, and in silence, for even the sympathy of my dearest relative I dare not ask. Oh, wherefore do I feel it shame to love one so good,

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so superior, so holy? because, because he does not love me, save with a brother's love; and I know he loves another."

The slight frame of the orphan shook beneath that inward struggle; there were times, in her hours of solitude, when such thoughts would come, spite of every effort to expel them, and there was only one way to obtain that self-control she so much needed, so continually exercised, till it became a second nature. She became aware her feelings had obtained undue ascendency, and, sinking on her knees, remained absorbed in prayer, fervent and heartfelt, truly the outpourings of a contrite and trusting spirit, confident in the power and mercy to which she appealed. That anguish passed ere she arose, and every sign of agitation had left her countenance and voice as she put her resolution into action, and returned to her cousin.

Emmeline had awoke from her brief and troubled slumbers, more restless and feverish than when she had first sought her couch; and, suffering as she was from that nervous and anxious state peculiar to approaching fever, the poor girl no longer resisted Ellen's evident determination, and clasping her hand between her own, now burning with fever, continually thanked her, in broken and feeble accents, for remaining with her, assuring her she did not feel so ill or as unhappy as she should have done had she been alone. Anxious as she was, Ellen would not arouse her aunt, but at the first break of day she softly entered the housekeeper's room, and succeeded in arousing without alarming her, informed her of Emmeline's restless state, and implored her to send at once for Mr. Maitland. Hastily rising, Ellis accompanied Ellen to her cousin's room, and instantly decided on complying with her request. The household were already on the alert, and a servant was speedily despatched; but, relieved as she was on this point, Ellen would not comply with the good housekeeper's request to repose herself for a few hours; she had resolved not to relinquish her post by the bedside of the young sufferer to any save her aunt herself. Ellis desisted, for a word from her favorite, almost her darling, as Ellen from many circumstances had become, was to her always sufficient.

Mrs. Hamilton and Mr. Maitland met at Emmeline's door, to the astonishment, and, at first, alarm of the former—an alarm which subsided into comparative relief, as she listened to Ellen's hurried tale, although anxiety to a very high degree remained, and with some reason, for Ellen's fears were not unfounded. Emmeline's fever rapidly and painfully increased,

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and for a week her parents hung over her couch almost despairing of her recovery; their fond hearts almost breaking, as they heard her sweet voice, in the wild accent of delirious intervals, calling aloud on Arthur, and beseeching their consent and blessing to restore her to health; and scarcely less painful was it in her lucid hours to see her clasp her mother's hands repeatedly, and murmur, in a voice almost inarticulate from weakness—

"Do not be anxious or grieved for me, my own dear mamma, I shall soon get well, and be your happy Emmeline again. I cannot be miserable when I have you and papa and Ellen to love me so tenderly," and then she would cling to her mother's neck, and kiss her till she would sink to sleep upon her bosom, as in infancy and childhood she had so often done; and dearer than ever did that gentle girl become, in these hours of suffering, to all who had loved her so fondly before; they had deemed it almost impossible that affection could in any way be increased, and yet it was so. Strange must be that heart which can behold a being such as Emmeline cling to it, as if its protection and its love were now all that bound her to earth, and still remain unmoved and cold. Affection is ever strengthened by dependence—dependence at least like this; and there was something peculiarly touching in Emmeline's present state of mental weakness. Her parents felt, as they gazed on her, that they had occasioned the anguish which had prostrated her on a bed of sickness; and yet their child clung to them as if, in the intensity of her affection for them, and theirs for her, she would strive to forget her unhappy love, and be once more happy.

Time rolled heavily by, and some few weeks passed, ere Emmeline was sufficiently convalescent to leave her room, and then her pallid features and attenuated form were such constant and evident proofs of that mental as well as bodily fever, that Mrs. Hamilton could not look on her without pain. She was still inwardly restless and uneasy, though evidently struggling for cheerfulness, and Mr. Maitland, to whom some necessary particulars of her tale had been told, gave as his opinion, that some secret anxiety still rested on her mind, which would be much better removed; the real cause of that solicitude her parents very easily penetrated. Mr. Hamilton, fearing the effects of excitement in her still very delicate state, had refrained from telling her all he had accomplished in young Myrvin's favor during her sickness, but on hearing Mr. Mait-

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land's report, her parents both felt assured it was for that information she pined, and therefore determined on instantly giving her relief.

It was with the utmost tenderness and caution Mr. Hamilton alluded to the subject, and seating himself by her couch, playfully asked her if she would promise him to get well the sooner, if he gratified her by the pleasing intelligence that Arthur Myrvin's character was cleared, that his enemy had been discovered, his designs exposed, and himself obliged to leave the village, and the whole population were now as violently prejudiced in Arthur's favor, as they had formerly been against him; provoked also with themselves for their blind folly in receiving and encouraging the idle reports propagated against him, not one of which they now perceived were sufficiently well founded to stand before an impartial statement and accurate examination.

Had her parents doubted what had weighed on Emmeline's mind, the sudden light beaming in those saddened eyes, the flush kindling on those pale cheeks, the rapid movement with which she caught her father's hand, and looked in his face, as if fearful he would deceive her, all these minute but striking circumstances must have betrayed the truth. In a voice almost inarticulate from powerful emotion, she implored him to tell her every particular, and tenderly he complied.

He had followed, he said, her advice, and confronted Nurse Langford with the unprincipled man who had dared accuse a fellow-creature of a crime in reality committed by himself, and reckless as he was, he had shrunk in guilt and shame before her accusation, which was indeed the accusation of the dying, and avowing himself the real perpetrator of the sin, offered her a large bribe for secrecy, which, as might be expected, the widow indignantly refused. It was easy to perceive, his arts had worked on the old woman, Mary's grandmother, to believe him her friend and Arthur her foe; the poor old creature's failing intellect assisted his plans, while the reports he had insidiously circulated against the unfortunate young man also confirmed his tale. Little aware that the Widow Langford had been almost a mother to the poor girl his villany had ruined, and that she was likely to have heard the truth, being quite unconscious she had attended her dying moments, he published this falsehood, without any feeling of remorse or shame, hoping, by so doing, effectually to serve his employers, effect the disgrace of Myrvin, and completely

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screen himself. Mrs. Langford now found it was time indeed for her to come forward and perform her promise to Emmeline by proving young Myrvin's innocence, but hesitated how to commence. She was therefore both relieved and pleased at the entrance and inquiries of Mr. Hamilton, and promised to obey his directions faithfully, only imploring him to clear Mr. Myrvin's character, and expel Farmer Jefferies from the village, which, from the time of his settling there, she said, had been one scene of anarchy and confusion; frankly avowing, in answer to a question of Mr. Hamilton, that it was for Miss Emmeline's sake she was so anxious; she was sure she was interested in Mr. Myrvin's fate, and therefore she had mentioned the unhappy fate of poor Mary Brookes, to prove to her the young man had attended to his duty.

Many other startling proofs of Jefferies' evil conduct had the good widow, by silent but watchful attention, been enabled to discover, as also convincing evidence that the young curate had not been so neglectful or faulty as he had been reported. All her valuable information she now imparted to her master, to be used by him in any way his discretion might point out, promising to be ever ready at the slightest notice to prove all she had alleged. Mr. Hamilton carefully examined every circumstance, reflected for a brief period on his mode of action, and finally, assembling all the principal inhabitants around him, in the public school-room of the village, laid before them all the important facts he had collected, and besought their impartial judgment. He owned, he said, that he too had been prejudiced against Mr. Myrvin, whose life, while among them, many circumstances had combined to render unhappy, but that now, he heartily repented his injustice, for he felt convinced the greater part of what had been alleged against him was false. Those evil reports he proved had all originated from the machinations of Jefferies, and he implored them to consider whether they could still regard the words of one, against whom so much evil had now been proved, as they had formerly done, or could they really prove that their young curate had in truth been guilty of the misdemeanors with which he had been charged.

Mr. Howard, who was present, seconded his words, acknowledging that he too had been prejudiced, and adding, that he could not feel satisfied till he had avowed this truth, and asked his young friend's pardon for the injury he had done him.

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Nothing is more sudden and complete than changes in popular feeling. The shameful act of Jefferies, in casting on the innocent the stigma of shame and crime which was his own, was quite enough for the honest and simple villagers. At once they condemned themselves (which perhaps they might not have been quite so ready to do, had not Mr. Hamilton and their rector shown them the example), and not only defended and completely exculpated Myrvin, but in an incredibly short space of time, so many anecdotes of the young man's performance of his duty were collected, that had not Mr. Hamilton been aware of the violent nature of popular feeling, those defects which still remained, though excused by the recollection of the mental tortures Myrvin had been enduring, would undoubtedly have departed, as entirely as every darker shade on his character had done.

Convinced that Arthur's attention to parochial affairs, as well as his conduct in other matters, had been very opposite to that which had been reported, neither Mr. Howard nor Mr. Hamilton could feel satisfied till they had written to him, frankly avowing their injustice, and asking his pardon and forgetfulness of the past, and assuring him that, if his conduct continued equally worthy of approbation as it was at the present time, he should ever find in them sincere and active friends.

Mr. Hamilton felt he had much, very much to say to the young man; but in what manner to word it he was somewhat perplexed. He could not speak of his daughter, and yet Myrvin's conduct towards her had created a feeling of gratitude and admiration which he could not suppress. Many fathers would have felt indignation only at the young man's presumption, but Mr. Hamilton was neither so unreasonable nor so completely devoid of sympathy. It was he himself, he thought, who had acted imprudently in allowing him to associate so intimately with his daughters, not the fault of the sufferer. Myrvin had done but his duty indeed, but Mr. Hamilton knew well there were very few young men who would have acted as he had done, when conscious that his affection was returned with all the enthusiasm and devotedness of a disposition such as Emmeline's. How few but would have played with those feelings, tortured her by persuasions to forget duty for the sake of love; but Arthur had not done this, and the father's heart swelled towards him in gratitude and esteem; even while he knew the hopelessness of his love, he felt for the

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anguish which his sympathy told him Arthur must endure. After more deliberation and thought than he could have believed necessary for such a simple thing as to write a letter, Mr. Hamilton did achieve his object, retaining a copy of his epistle, to prove to his child he had been earnest in his assurances that Arthur's character should be cleared. Painfully agitated by the tale she had heard, and this unexpected confidence of her father, Emmeline glanced her eye over the paper, and read as follows:—

"*To the Rev. Arthur Myrvin, Hanover.*

"My dear Myrvin,—You will be no doubt astonished at receiving this letter, brief as I intend it to be, from one with whom you parted in no very friendly terms, and who has, I grieve to own, given you but little reason to believe me your friend. When a man has been unjust and prejudiced, it becomes his peremptory duty, however pride may rebel, to do all in his power to atone for it by an honorable reparation, both in word and deed, towards him he may have injured. Such, my young friend, is at present our relative positions, and I am at a loss to know how best to express my sense of your honorable conduct and my own injustice, which occasioned a a degree of harshness in my manner towards you when we separated, which, believe me, I now recall both with regret and pain. Circumstances have transpired in the parish once under your care, which have convinced not only me, but all those still more violently prejudiced against you, that your fair fame was tarnished by the secret machinations and insidious representations of an enemy, and not by the faulty nature of your conduct; and knowing this we most earnestly appeal to the nobleness of your nature for forgetfulness of the past, and beg you will endeavor henceforward to regard those as your sincere friends whom you have unhappily had too much reason to believe otherwise.

"For myself, my dear Myrvin, I do not doubt that you will do this, for candidly I own, that only now I have learned the true nature of your character. When I first knew you, I was interested in your welfare, as the chosen friend of my son, and also for your father's sake, now it is for your own. The different positions we occupy in life, the wide distance which circumstances place between us, will, I feel sure, prevent all misconception on your part as to my meaning, and prevent your drawing from my friendly words conclusions opposite to what I intend. therefore I do not hesitate to avow that I not only es-

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teem, but from my heart I thank you, Myrvin, for your indulgence of those honorable feelings, that perfect integrity which bade you resign your curacy and depart from Oakwood. I did you wrong, great wrong; words can but faintly compensate injury, though words have been the weapon by which that injury has been inflicted, yet I feel confident you will not retain displeasure, natural as it was; you will consent once more to look on and appeal, if you should ever require it, to the father of Herbert as your willing friend. Believe me, that if it be in my power to assist you, you will never appeal in vain. Lord Malvern, I rejoice to find, is your stanch friend, and nothing shall be wanting on my part to render that friendship as permanent as advantageous. Mrs. Hamilton begs me to inform you, that in this communication of my feelings, I have transcribed her own. Injustice indeed she never did you; but admiration, esteem, and gratitude are inmates of her bosom as sincerely as they are of my own. Continue, my young friend, this unwavering regard to the high principles of your nature, this steady adherence to duty, spite of prejudice and wrong, if indeed they should ever again assail you, and the respect of your fellow-creatures will be yours as warmly, as unfeignedly, as is that of "Your sincere friend,

"ARTHUR HAMILTON."

No word, no sound broke from the parched lips of Emmeline as she ceased to read. She returned the paper to her father in that same silence, and turning from his glance, buried her face in her hands. Mr. Hamilton guessed at once all that was passing in that young and tortured heart; he drew her to him, and whispered fondly—

"Speak to me, my Emmeline. You do not think he can mistake my feelings. He will not doubt all prejudice is removed."

"Oh, no, no," she replied, after a severe struggle for composure; "you have said enough, dear, dear papa. I could not have expected more."

For a moment she clung to his neck, and covered his cheek with kisses, then gently withdrawing herself from his arms, quietly but hastily left the room. For about an hour she might have remained absent, and Mrs. Hamilton would not disturb her; and when she returned there was no trace of agitation; pale she was indeed, and her eye had lost its brightness, but that was too customary now to be deemed the effect

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of excited emotion, and no farther notice was taken, save that perhaps the manner of her parents and Ellen towards her that night was even fonder than usual.

Once again Mr. Hamilton mentioned Arthur Myrvin; to speak of the pleasing and satisfactory letters both he and Mr. Howard had received from him. He addressed himself to Ellen, telling her, Arthur had written in a manner tending to satisfy even her friendly feelings towards him. Emmeline joined not in the conversation. Her father did not offer to show her the letter, and she stilled the yearnings of her young and loving heart. From that hour the name of Arthur Myrvin was never heard in the halls of Oakwood. There was no appearance of effort in the avoidance, but still it was not spoken; not even by Percy and Herbert, nor by Caroline or her husband. Even the letters of Lady Florence and Lady Emily Lyle ceased to make him their principal object. Emmeline knew the volatile nature of the latter, and therefore was not surprised that she had grown tired of the theme; that Lady Florence should so completely cease all mention of the tutor of her favorite brother was rather more strange, but she did so perhaps in her letters to Ellen, and of that Emmeline had not courage to ask. St. Eval would speak of Lord Louis, expressing hopes that he was becoming more steady; but it so chanced that, although at such times Emmeline, spite of herself, ever longed for somewhat more, the magic name that would have bidden every pulse throb never reached her ears, and her excited spirit would sink back in despondency and gloom, increased from the momentary excitement which expectation had vainly called forth.

Astonished indeed had Arthur Myrvin been at the receipt of his letters from Oakwood and the Rectory. Mr. Howard's was productive of gratification alone; that of Mr. Hamilton afforded even greater pleasure, combined with a more than equal measure of pain. He had hoped Emmeline would have answered his letter. She did not, but he knew her influence had been exercised in his favor; and agony as it was, he acknowledged she had acted wisely. There was too much devotedness in Emmeline's character for Myrvin to encourage one lingering doubt that his affections were returned; and as he thought on her steady discharge of filial duty, as he recalled their parting interview, and felt she had not wavered from the path she had pointed out, his own energies, notwithstanding that still lingering, still acute suffering, were roused within

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him, and he resolved he would obey her. She should see her appeal had not been made in vain; she should never blush for the man she had honored with her love; he would endeavor to deserve her esteem, though they might never meet again. He felt he had been too much the victim of an ill-fated passion; he had by neglect in trifles encouraged the prejudice against him, lost himself active and willing friends; this should no longer be, and Myrvin devoted himself so perseveringly, so assiduously to his pupil, allowing himself scarcely any time for solitary thought, that not the keenest observer would have suspected there was that upon the young man's heart which was poisoning the buoyancy of youth, robbing life of its joy, and rendering him old before his time.

That Mr. Hamilton, the father of his Emmeline, that his feelings should have thus changed towards him, that he should admire and esteem instead of condemn, was a matter of truly heartfelt pleasure. Hope would have shook aloft her elastic wings, and carried him beyond himself, had not that letter in the same hour dashed to the earth his soaring fancy, and placed the seal upon his doom. He could not be mistaken; Mr. Hamilton knew all that had passed between him and Emmeline, and while he expressed his gratitude for the integrity and forbearance he (Myrvin) had displayed, he as clearly said their love was hopeless, their union never could take place.

Myrvin had known this before, then why did his heart sink in even deeper, darker despondency as he read? why were his efforts at cheerfulness so painful, so unavailing? He knew not and yet struggled on, but weeks, ay, months rolled by, and yet that pang remained unconquered still.

And did Emmeline become again in looks and glee as we have known her? Was she even to her mother's eye again a child? Strangers, even some of her father's friends, might still have deemed her so; but alas! a mother's love strove vainly thus to be deceived. Health returned, and with it appeared to come her wonted enthusiasm, her animated spirits. Not once did she give way to depression; hers was not that pining submission which is more pain to behold than decided opposition, that resignation which has its foundation in pride, not in humility, as its possessors suppose. Emmeline's submission was none of these. Her duties as daughter and sister and friend, as well as those to the neighboring poor, were, if possible, more actively and perseveringly performed than they had ever been before. Not one of her former favorite employ-

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ments was thrown aside. The complete unselfishness of her nature was more clearly visible than ever, and was it strange that she became dearer than ever to those with whom she lived? Her parents felt she was twining herself more and more around their hearts, and beheld, with inexpressible anguish, that though her young mind was so strong, her fragile frame was too weak to support the constant struggle. She never complained; there was no outward failing of health, but there was a nameless something hovering round her, which even her doting parents could not define, but which they felt too forcibly to shake off; and notwithstanding every effort to expel the idea, that nameless something brought with it alarm —alarm defined indeed too clearly; but of which even to each other they could not speak.

Time passed, and Herbert Hamilton, as the period of his ordination was rapidly approaching, lost many of those painfully foreboding feelings which for the last three years had so constantly and painfully assailed him. He felt stronger in health than he had ever remembered to have done, and the spirit of cheerfulness, and hope, and joy, breathing in the letters of his Mary, affected him with the same unalloyed feelings of anticipated happiness; sensations of holiness, of chastened thanksgiving, pervaded his every thought, the inward struggle appeared passed. There was a calm upon his young spirit, so soothing and so blessed, that the future rose before him unsullied by a cloud; anticipation was so bright, it seemed a foretaste of that glorious heaven, the goal to which he and his Mary looked—the home they sought together.

Percy had also obtained honorable distinction at Oxford; his active spirit would not have permitted him to remain quiet in college so long, had he not determined to see his brother ordained ere he commenced the grand tour, to which he looked with much zest, as the completion to his education, and render him, if he turned it to advantage, in all respects fitted to serve his country nobly in her senate, the point to which he had looked, from the first hour he was capable of thought, with an ardor which increased as that long-desired time approached.

The disgraceful expulsion of Cecil Grahame from Cambridge opened afresh that wound in his father's heart which Annie had first inflicted, but which the conduct of Lilla had succeeded in soothing sufficiently to bid her hope it would in time be healed. The ill-directed young man had squandered away the whole of his mother's fortune, and behaved in a man

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ner that rendered expulsion inevitable. He chose to join the army, and, with a painfully foreboding heart, his father procured him a commission in a regiment bound for Ireland, hoping he would be exposed to fewer temptations there than did he remain in England.

Lady Helen, as her health continued to decline, felt conscience becoming more and more upbraiding; its voice would not be stilled. She had known her duty as a mother; she had seen it beautifully portrayed before her in Mrs. Hamilton, but she had neglected its performance, and her chastisement she felt had come. Annie's conduct she had borne, she had forgiven her, scarcely appearing conscious of the danger her daughter had escaped; but Cecil was her darling, and his disgrace came upon her as a thunderbolt, drawing the veil from her eyes, with startling and bewildering light. She had concealed his childish faults, she had petted him in every whim, encouraged him in every folly in his youth; to hide his faults from a severe but not too harsh a judge, she had lowered herself in the eyes of her husband, and achieved no good. Cecil was expelled, disgracefully expelled, and the wretched mother, as she contrasted his college life with that of the young Hamiltons, felt she had been the cause; she had led him on by the flowery paths of indulgence to shame and ruin. He came not near her; he joined his regiment, and left England, without bidding her farewell, and she felt she should never see him more. From that hour she sunk; disease increased, and though she still lingered, and months passed, and there was no change for the worse, yet still both Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton felt that death was written on her brow, that, however he might loiter on his way, his destined victim would never again feel the blessedness of health; and all their efforts were now directed in soothing the affliction of Grahame, and lead him to console by tenderness the remaining period of his unhappy wife's existence. They imparted not to him their fears, but they rested not till their desire was obtained, and Lady Helen could feel she was not only forgiven but still beloved, and would be sincerely mourned, both by her husband and Lilla, in whom she had allowed herself at one time to be deceived.

Having now brought the affairs of Oakwood, and all intimately connected with it, to a point, from which no subject of interest took place for above a year, at that period we resume our narrative.

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CHAPTER XVI.

It was a fine summer morning. The windows of a pretty little sitting-room were thrown wide open, and the light breeze, loaded with the perfume of a thousand flowers, played refreshingly on the pale cheek of our young friend Emmeline, who, reclining on a sofa, looked forth on beautiful nature with mingled sadness and delight. More than a year had elapsed since we last beheld her, and she was changed, painfully changed. She still retained her childish expression of countenance, which ever made her appear younger than in reality she was, but its ever-varying light, its beautiful glow, were gone; yet she complained not. The smile ever rested on her lips in the presence of her parents; her voice was ever joyous, and no sigh, no repining word, betrayed the breaking heart within. She recognized with a full and grateful heart the blessings still surrounding her, and struggled long and painfully to be content; but that fond yearning would not be stilled, that deep love no effort could dispel. Still there were times when those who had never known her in former years would have pronounced her well, quite well in health; and Emmeline would smile when such remarks reached her, and wonder if her parents were so deceived. Sometimes she thought they were, for the name of Arthur Myrvin was no longer suppressed before her. She heard of him, of his devotion to his pupil, of the undeviating integrity and steadiness which characterized him, and promised fair to lead Lord Louis in the same bright paths; she had heard of Arthur's devoted care of his pupil during a long and dangerous illness; that he, under Divine goodness, had been the instrument of saving the youth's life, and restoring him to health; and if she permitted no sign to betray the deep, absorbing interest she felt, if her parents imagined he was forgotten, they knew not the throbbings of her heart.

She was conversing this morning with Mrs. Cameron, who had learned to love Emmeline dearly; from being very often at Oakwood, she and her daughters were looked on by all Mr. Hamilton's children as part of the family.

"Is not Flora delighted at the idea of again seeing her brother?" Emmeline asked, in answer to Mrs. Cameron's information that Walter was returning with his regiment to England, and in a very few weeks would be once more an in-

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mate of her home. She answered cheerfully in the affirmative, and Emmeline again inquired—"Was Captain Cameron at all acquainted with Cecil Grahame? Did he know the cause of his having been so disgracefully cashiered?"

"Their regiments were quartered in such different parts of Ireland," replied Mrs. Cameron, "that I believe they only met on one occasion, and then Walter was glad to withdraw from the society of the dissolute young men by whom Lieutenant Grahame was always surrounded. The cause of his disgrace appears enveloped in mystery. Walter certainly alluded to it, but so vaguely, that I did not like to ask further particulars. I dreaded the effect it would have on Mr. Grahame, but little imagined poor Lady Helen would have sunk beneath it."

"I believe few know how she doted on that boy. It was misguided, but still it was love that caused her to ruin him as she did in his childhood. From the hour he was expelled from Cambridge, she never held up her head; it was so cruelly ungrateful of him to set off for Ireland without once seeking her; and this last stroke was too much for her to bear. She still hoped, despite her better judgment, that he would in the end distinguish himself, and she could not meet the disappointment."

"Did she long survive the intelligence?"

"Scarcely four-and-twenty hours. Mr. Grahame, feeling unable to command himself, requested mamma and Lilla to impart to her the distressing information, which they did most tenderly; but their caution was entirely fruitless. Her constant inquiry was relative to his present situation, and when she heard that he had not been seen since he was cashiered she sunk into a state of insensibility from which she never recovered."

"And Mr. Grahame?"

"The shock rendered him almost distracted, for it was so sudden. Lady Helen had become so altered lately, that she was devotedly loved both by her husband and child; she had been so long ailing, that both Lilla and her father fondly hoped and believed she would be spared to them still some years longer, though she might never entirely recover her health. Mr. Grahame's feelings are stronger than most people imagine, but his misfortunes have bowed him down even more than I could have believed possible."

"They appeared so united and happy, that I do not won

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ner at it," observed Mrs. Cameron. "I have seldom seen such devotedness as Lady Helen received from both her husband and child; she always welcomed their affectionate attentions as if she felt herself undeserving of them. I was interested in her, she bore her sufferings so meekly."

"And poor Lilla, how is she?"

"She suffers much, but behaves admirably. Ellen says her self-control is extraordinary, when we remember she was one of those beings who could never conceal a single feeling. Her poor father seems to look to her now as his sole blessing and support; she soothes his sorrow so quietly, so tenderly, and ever tries to prevent his thoughts dwelling on the stigma which Cecil's disgraceful conduct has cast upon his name. I trust time will restore that calm tranquillity which he has enjoyed the last year, but I must own I fear it. If this moody irritability continue, Lilla will have much to bear, but she will do her duty, and that will bring its own reward."

A faint and scarcely audible sigh escaped from Emmeline as she spoke. Mrs. Cameron, without noticing, asked when she expected her brothers to return home from London.

"Herbert takes orders next week, and they return together very soon afterwards. He is, as you will believe, delighted at the near approach of an event which has been his guiding star since his boyhood. I never saw him looking so well or so happy, and Percy shares his joy, and we shall have him near us, I am happy to say, for he will be the minister of our own dear parish, which, by Mr. Howard's promotion, will be vacant about the time he will require it. Mr. Howard says he thinks he should have turned rebel, and refused the presentation of a valuable living, with the title of archdeacon attached to his name, if any one but Herbert were to succeed him here; but as he leaves his flock under his care, he will not refuse the blessings offered him. He does not go very far from us; if he had I should have been so very sorry, that even my brother's succeeding him would not have satisfied me."

There was a short pause, which was broken by Emmeline saying—

"Speaking about Mr. Howard and Herbert has made me forget Percy, dear fellow. You know how he has raved about the grand tour he is going to make, all the curiosities he is to see and bring home for me, even to the dome of St. Peter's or the crater of Vesuvius, if I wish to see them. He has taken

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my provoking remarks in good part, and sets off with Caroline and her husband in July. My sister's health has been so delicate the last three months, that she is advised to go to Geneva. Her little boy grows such a darling, I shall miss him almost as much as his mother."

"Do you stay with them at Castle Terryn before they go?"

"I do not think I shall, for at present I seem to dislike the idea of leaving home. They come to us, I believe, a few weeks hence, in order that we may be all together, which we could not very well be at St. Eval's."

"Has Lord St. Eval quite lost all anxiety on his brother's account? The physicians said they could never have brought him through it, had it not been for Mr. Myrvin's prudent and unceasing care."

"Yes; every letter from Castle Malvern confirms the report; all anxiety has been over some weeks now; indeed, before the Marquis reached Hanover, where he received from his son's own lips an affecting and animated account of his own imprudence, and Mr. Myrvin's heroic as well as prudent conduct."

"Was there an accident, then? I thought it was from the fever then raging in the town."

"Lord Louis had determined, against his tutor's consent, to join a party of very gay young men, who wished to leave Hanover for a time and make an excursion to the sea-shore. Mr. Myrvin, who did not quite approve of some of the young gentlemen who were to join the party, remonstrated, but in vain. Lord Louis was obstinate, and Mr. Myrvin, finding all his efforts fruitless, accompanied his pupil, very much to the annoyance of the whole party, who determined to render his sojourn with them so distasteful, that he would quickly withdraw himself. Lord Louis, led on by evil companions, turned against his tutor, who, however, adhered to his duty unshrinkingly. A sailing match was resolved on, and, notwithstanding the predictions of Mr. Myrvin, that a violent storm was coming on and likely to burst over them before half their day's sport was completed, they set off, taunting him with being afraid of the water. They declared there was no room for him in their boats, and pushed off without him. He followed them closely, and fortunate was it that he did so. The storm burst with fury; the little vessels were most of them shattered to pieces, and many of the misguided and unfortunate young men fell victims to their wilful folly. Some, who were good swimmers,

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escaped, but Lord Louis had struck his head against a projecting rock, and, stunned and senseless, must have sunk, had not Mr. Myrvin been mercifully permitted to bear him to the shore in safety. He was extremely ill, but in a few weeks recovered sufficiently to return to Hanover, unconscious, as was Mr. Myrvin, of the virulent fever then raging there. Already in delicate health, he was almost instantly attacked by the disease, in its most alarming and contagious form; the servants fled in terror from the house; only one, his own valet, an Englishman, remained near him. But Mr. Myrvin never left him; day and night he attended, soothed, and relieved him. His efforts were, happily, rewarded: Lord Louis lived, and his preceptor escaped all infection. The Marquis and his son have both written of Mr. Myrvin in the most gratifying terms; and the Marchioness told mamma she could never in any way repay the debt of gratitude she owed him."

Mrs. Cameron was much interested in Emmeline's narrative, and asked if they were not soon to return to England.

"They may have already arrived," replied Emmeline "Florence wrote me a fortnight ago she was counting the days till their return. I sent a letter, apparently from her, this morning to Woodlands for Ellen, as I am not quite sure whether she will return home this evening or not, and perhaps that contains the intelligence. His mother and sisters will be overjoyed to have him once more with them, after the dangers he has passed."

"Has Mr. Myrvin any family?"

"Only his father, a truly good, kind old man, the rector of Llangwillan."

"And are you not desirous to see this admirable young man, this devoted preceptor, my dear Emmeline?" said Mrs. Cameron, smiling. "Will he not be an excellent hero of romance?"

Emmeline answered, that as she already knew him, she could not throw around him the halo of imagination; she was content to admire his character as it was, without decking him in other charms. Their further conversation turned upon other and indifferent subjects till Mrs. Cameron departed.

The death of Lady Helen and the misconduct of her son had cast such deep gloom over Woodlands, that not only Emmeline, but both Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton feared Grahame would never rouse himself from the moody apathy into which

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he had fallen. He felt disgrace had fallen on his name, a stain never to be erased; that all men would shun the father of one so publicly dishonored. The extent of Cecil's conduct was scarcely known even to his father; but that he had used dishonest measures at the gambling table to discharge enormous debts; that he had behaved insolently to his superior officers; that it required great interest to prevent a much harsher sentence than had been his punishment—these facts were known all over England. The previously unsullied name of Grahame was now synonymous with infamy; and it was even supposed Cecil would never show his face in England again. Mr. Grahame shrunk in misery from encountering the glance even of his friends; he felt as if he too shared the disgrace of his son, he and his young, his beautiful Lilla; she whom he had anticipated, with so much pleasure, introducing among his friends, she was doomed to share with him the solitude, which he declared was the only fit abode of ignominy; and even to her his manner was wayward and uncertain—at times almost painfully fond, at others equally stern and harsh. Lilla's character was changed; she struggled to bear with him, unrepiningly, dutifully, conscious that the eye of her God was upon her, however her father might appear insensible to her affection.

Even the society of Mr. Howard and Mr. Hamilton was irksome; their efforts to rouse and cheer him were unavailing, and they could only hope time would achieve that for which friendship was inadequate.

Herbert's engagement with Mary Greville still remained untold, but he looked forward to discovering his long treasured secret, when he beheld himself indeed an ordained minister of God; Percy perhaps was in his confidence, but neither his sisters nor Ellen. Mary's letters were full of comfort to him; such pure and beautiful affection breathed in every line, that even the sadness which the few last unconsciously betrayed did not alarm him. He accounted for it by her reluctance to quit her beautiful retreat in the Swiss mountains for the confusion and heat of Paris, where she now resided. A few months previously they had been visited in their retreat by her father; scarcely more surprised were they at his appearance than at his manner, which was kinder and more indulgent than Mary had ever remembered it. For a short time Mrs. Greville indulged hopes, that their long separation had effected a change in her husband, and that they should at length be happy together.

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He did not know much about Alfred, he said, except that he was well, and travelling with some friends in different parts of the Continent.

Mrs. Greville tried to be satisfied, and her cheering hopes did not desert her even when her husband expressed a wish that she would reside with him at Paris. The wish rather confirmed them, as it evinced that he was no longer indifferent to her own and his child's society. With joyful alacrity she consented, but in vain endeavored to banish from Mary's mind the foreboding fears that appeared to have filled it, from the hour it was settled they were to leave Monte Rosa. In vain her mother affectionately represented how much nearer she would be to Herbert; nothing could remove, though she strove to conquer, this seemingly uncalled-for and indefinable despondency.

"I confess my weakness," she wrote to her betrothed, "but I had so often pictured remaining at Monte Rosa till you came for me, as you had promised, so often pictured to myself the delight of showing you my favorite haunts, ere we left them together for still dearer England, that I cannot bear to find these visions dispelled without pain. I know you will tell me I ought to be thankful for this great and happy change in my father, and bear every privation for the chance of binding him to us for ever. Do not reprove me, dear Herbert, but there is that about my father that bids me tremble still, and whispers the calm is not lasting; in vain I strive against it, but a voice tells me, in thus leaving Monte Rosa, peace lingers in its beautiful shades, and woe's dark shadow stands threatening before me."

Herbert longed to go to her, and thus disperse all these foreboding fears, but that pleasure the near approach of his ordination prevented; but fondly he looked forward with unalloyed hope in a few months to seek his Mary, and at once banish all indefinable sorrow by making her his own. Not a doubt entered his mind of Mr. Greville's consent, when he should in person demand it, and he was eager to do so while this strangely indulgent humor continued.

The first few months of her residence in Paris were fraught with happiness for Mrs. Greville. Her husband's manner did not change. They mingled in society, and the admiration Mary's quiet beauty excited afforded the greatest pleasure to her mother, and even appeared to inspire her father with some pride. To the poor girl herself it was irksome and painful;

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out she tried to convince herself these feelings were wrong, and checked them even in her letters to Herbert.

Ellen returned from Woodlands, where she had been staying with Lilla, whose affection for her continued unabated; for she found in her society and sympathy much comfort since her mother's death. There was little change visible in Ellen. Her health was established, her pensive beauty unimpaired. Still was she the meek, unassuming, gentle girl she had long been; still to the eye of strangers somewhat cold and indifferent. Her inward self was becoming every year more strengthened; she had resolved to use every effort to *suffer*, without the slightest portion of bitterness impregnating her sentiments towards her fellow-creatures, or the world in general. Her lot she *knew* was to *bear;* her duty she *felt* was to *conceal.*

Ellen, on her return home, gave her cousin the letter which Emmeline had mentioned as having forwarded to her that morning. It was fraught with interest, and the anxious eye of Mrs. Hamilton moved not from her daughter's countenance as she read. Still was it so calm that even she was puzzled; and again the thought, "Is it for him" she is thus drooping, fading like a flower before me? is it, indeed, the struggle between love and duty which has made her thus? crossed her mind, as it had often, very often done before, and brought with it renewed perplexity.

Lady Florence had written in the highest spirits, announcing the return of her father, Lord Louis, and his tutor; that her brother was looking quite well and strong, and was the same dear, merry, mischievous boy as ever; delighted to be in England, abusing all the Germans, and professing and displaying the most extreme fondness for Mr. Myrvin.

"He speaks of Mr. Myrvin in terms that brings tears to my eyes, tears of which, my dear Ellen, I am not at all ashamed. The only drawback to the life of a soldier, which my brother has now positively resolved on, in spite of all our persuasions, exists, he says, in the consequent separation from Mr. Myrvin, and he almost wishes to go to Cambridge, to chain him to his side; but for Mr. Myrvin's sake, I am glad this will not be. He is looking ill, very ill, quite different to the Arthur Myrvin we knew at Oakwood; a change has come over him which I cannot describe, and even to myself can scarcely define. He is much more polished in his manner, but it is tinged with such deep melancholy, or intense thought, I really do not know which it is, that he appears many years

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older than when he left England. My father has at length prevailed on him to resign all idea of again seeking the arduous charge of tutor, but, with that honest pride which I so much admire and esteem, he has refused all papa's offers of advancement, only consenting to accept the living on Eugene's estate, when Louis shall require his services no longer. I trust the healthy air of Cornwall and the quiet of his parish will restore him to health, for the care which preserved that of Louis has, I fear, ruined his own. He goes to London to-morrow, to see Herbert; the society of your cousins cannot fail to do him good. Louis joins the army in a few months, and then Mr. Myrvin will take possession of his living; but you will in all probability see them before, as Lord and Lady St. Eval have sent a pressing invitation for them to come down to Castle Terryn, and as soon as Mr. Myrvin returns from London, Louis intends doing so. I want to hear Herbert's opinion of his friend, as my dismal fancies concerning him may, after all, be only a woman's fancy, yet looking ill he decidedly is."

So wrote Lady Florence, and very soon Herbert and Percy's letters home confirmed all she had said. Either the air of Germany had not been congenial, or some other cause had so changed his outward appearance and tinged his manner, that Herbert could not look on him without pain; but the restless irritation, the haughty indifference which had been his before he left Oakwood, no longer existed. There was a quiet dignity about him that prevented all intrusive sympathy, a mild, steady lustre in his dark-gray eye, which so clearly said conscience was at peace, that Herbert instinctively felt the bonds of friendship stronger than they had ever been before; he was no longer anxious, for he felt assured the errors of Arthur's former life were conquered, and he wrote to his father concerning his friend with all his native eloquence.

Emmeline made no observation; her young soul was absorbed in an intense feeling of thanksgiving, that her prayers had been heard. Strength had been granted him, and he had done his duty; he was esteemed, beloved; his character was pure and bright; and if the gulf between them remained impassable, should she murmur, when *all* for which she had prayed had been vouchsafed her? But a sterner call of obedience appeared about to hover over her, from which her young spirit shrunk back appalled.

Herbert's anxious wishes were accomplished; there was no longer any barrier to his earnest prayers to become a servant

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of his God, and of service to his fellow-creatures. The six years in which he had labored unceasingly, untiringly, to prepare himself for the life which from his boyhood he had chosen, now appeared but as a passing dream, and as he knelt before the venerable bishop, his feelings became almost overpowering. Tears rose in his eyes, and he drooped his head upon his hands to conceal them. He felt this was no common life on which he entered, no mere profession, in which he would be at liberty to think and act as he pleased. Herbert felt that he had vowed himself to do the work of God; that in it comprised the good of his fellow-creatures, the stern conquest of his own rebellious will; that his *actions*, not his language only, should uphold the glory of his Maker.

The return of Percy and Herbert brought pleasure to Oakwood, and a week or two afterwards Lord and Lady St. Eval, with their little boy, arrived, imparting additional happiness. Emmeline was surprised at seeing them, for she thought Lord Louis and his preceptor were expected at Castle Terryn. Lord St. Eval often spoke of his brother, and alluded to Myrvin, and even hinted his thanks to Emmeline for her exertions in the latter's favor, when the Marquis was hesitating whether or not to intrust him with the charge of his son; but on such matters he never spoke openly, yet not so guardedly as to betray to Emmeline he was acquainted with her secret.

Mr. Hamilton had many private conversations both with the young Earl and his son Herbert, but what the subject was which so engrossed him, only Mrs. Hamilton knew.

The return of Edward, too, from a short cruise, gave additional spirit to Oakwood. The young sailor had rapidly run through the grades of lieutenant, and now stood the first on the line; his character both as a sailor and a man was confirmed. He was as deservedly respected by his messmates as beloved by his family, and to Ellen he was indeed dear. The most perfect confidence existed between this affectionate brother and sister, except on one point, and on that even to Edward she could not speak; but he had not one thought, one feeling which he concealed from her, he sought no other friend. Scarcely could Mrs. Cameron and her son Walter recognize in this amiable young man the headstrong, fiery, overbearing lad they had known in India.

The little party at Oakwood had all either walked or ridden out, and Mrs. Hamilton alone remained at home. She stood by the side of Emmeline, who was asleep, peacefully and

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sweetly; a smile, bright and beautiful as of other days, played round her lips. The mother reflected on the words of Mr. Maitland, who had assured her, the remedy he proposed would be successful. "Make her happy, remove this weighty load which weighs upon her heart, and she will live to be the blessing she has ever been to all who love her."

Tears of mingled feeling rose to the eyes of Mrs. Hamilton as she watched her child. Emmeline's lips moved. "Arthur, dear Arthur," she murmured, a faint flush rising to her cheek, and the smile heightened in its brilliancy; a few minutes, and her eyes unclosed; a shade of disappointment passed over her features, a faint sigh struggled to escape, but it was checked, for she met her mother's fond glance, and smiled.

"Why are you not gone out, dearest mother, this lovely evening? Why stay with such a dull companion as I am? Percy and Edward could offer so many more attractions, and I am sure it is not with their good-will you are here."

"Would my Emmeline refuse me the sweet pleasure of watching her, tending her? Believe me, dearest, without you at my side, the park and this lovely evening would lose half their attractions."

"Do not say so, my own mother, I am not ill, only lazy, and that you were not wont to encourage; my eyes would close, spite of all my efforts. But why should you have the uninteresting task of watching my slumbers?"

"Because, dearest, I will not abandon my office, till it is claimed as the right of another. It will soon be, my Emmeline; but do not send me from your side till then."

"The right of another, dearest mother? whose right will it ever be but yours? who can ever be to me the tender nurse that you have been?"

"One who will vow to love, protect, and cherish you; one who loves you, my own Emmeline, and longs to claim you as his own, and restore, by his affection, the health and spirits you have lost; one who has the consent and blessing of your father and myself, and waits but for yours."

Emmeline started from her recumbent posture.

"Oh, send me not from you, mother, my own mother! Do not, oh, do not compel me to marry!" she exclaimed, in a tone of agony. "The affection of a husband restore my health! oh, no, no, no, it would break my heart at once, and you would send me from you but to die. Mother, oh, let me stay with you. Do not let my father command my obedience; in every

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thing else I will obey but in this." She hid her face in Mrs Hamilton's bosom, and wept bitterly.

"We will command nothing that can make you miserable, my own," replied her mother, soothingly. "But you will love him, my Emmeline, you will love him as he loves you; his fond affection cannot fail to make you happy. You will learn to know him—to value his noble virtues, his honorable principles. As his wife, new pleasures, new duties, will be around you. Health will return, and I shall see my Emmeline once more as she was—my own happy child."

"And has it indeed gone so far that both you and my father have consented, and I must disobey and displease my parents, or be miserable for life?"

"My child," said Mrs. Hamilton, so solemnly, that Emmeline involuntarily checked her tears, "my child, you shall never marry the husband we have chosen for you, unless you can love and be happy with him; sacredly and irrevocably I promise this. You shall not sacrifice yourself for a doubtful duty. If, when you have seen and known him, your wishes still are contrary to ours, we will not demand your obedience. If you still prefer your mother's home, never, never shall you go from me. Be comforted, my Emmeline,—do not weep thus. Will you not trust me? If you cannot love, you shall not marry."

"But, my father—oh, mamma, will he too promise me this?"

"Yes, love; doubt him not," and a smile so cheering, so happy, was round Mrs. Hamilton's lips as she spoke, that Emmeline felt unconsciously relieved. "We only wish our Emmeline's consent to an introduction to this estimable young man, who has so long and so faithfully loved her, and if still she is inexorable we must submit. Could I send you from me without your free consent? Could I part from you except for happiness?"

Emmeline threw her arms about her mother's neck. In vain she struggled to ask who was the young man of whom her mother spoke. Why should she inquire, when she felt that he never, never could be any thing to her? Bitterly, painfully she struggled to dismiss the thought hastily from her mind, and gladly hailed the entrance of the nurse with her little nephew as a relief. Her mother joined her in caressing and playing with him, and ere he was dismissed the scattered parties had returned, and there was no opportunity for farther confidential converse.

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It was a happy, merry party at Oakwood, but the presence of Lilla Grahame was wanting to make it complete. Ellen was constantly with her, for she would not permit the lively proceedings of home to interfere with the call of friendship; and in this task of kindness she was constantly joined by Edward, who would frequently leave gayer amusements to offer Lilla his company on her walk, and his intelligent conversation, his many amusing anecdotes, frequently drew a smile from his young listener, and, combined with Ellen's presence and more quiet sympathy, raised her spirits, and encouraged her in her painful task of bearing with, if she could not soothe, her father's still irritable temperament. Woodlands was to be sold; for Mr. Grahame had resolved on burying himself and his child in some retired cottage, where his very existence might be forgotten. In vain Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton combated this resolution, and entreated him at least to settle near them; gloomy, almost morose, he still spoke of Wales as the only place where he was not known, where his name might not be associated with disgrace. Lilla was just of an age to feel the parting with the kind friends of her childhood as a most painful trial, but she determined to reconcile herself to her father's will, whatever it might be.

Captain Cameron too was an agreeable addition to the society of Oakwood; high-spirited, and naturally joyous, Percy liked him as a kindred spirit; and reserved, though intelligent, Herbert found many points of his character assimilate with his. Mrs. Cameron's station in life had been somewhat raised since her return to England. Sir Hector Cameron, her husband's elder brother, childless and widowed, found his morose and somewhat miserly disposition softened, and his wish to know his brother's family became too powerful to be resisted. He had seen Walter in Ireland, and admired the young man ere he knew who he was; a farther acquaintance, ere he discovered himself as his uncle, heightened these good impressions, and Walter, to his utter astonishment, found himself suddenly the heir to a rich baronetcy, and his mother and sisters comfortably provided for. He rejoiced at his good fortune, but not at the baronetcy itself; not for the many pleasures which, as Sir Hector's heir, now stood temptingly before him, but because he might now indeed encourage an affection, which he had once believed was as hopeless as it was intense.

There is but one person whom we knew in a former page whose fate we have omitted to mention; it may be well to do

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so here, ere we proceed regularly with our narrative. The high-minded, unselfish, truth-loving Lady Gertrude Lyle had at length, to the great joy of her parents, consented to reward long years of silent devotion, by bestowing her hand on the Marquis of Alford. They were married, and need we say that they were happy? Lady Gertrude's love to her husband increased with each passing year, and he, as time paased on, missed nothing of that bright example of goodness, of piety, and virtue, which had led him to deserve her love.

"Emmeline, dearest, put on your prettiest dress to-night, and confine these flowing curls with some tasteful wreath," said Mr. Hamilton, playfully addressing his daughter, about a week after the conversation with her mother. The dressing-bell had sounded, and the various inmates of Oakwood were obeying its summons as he spoke, and Caroline laughingly asked her father how long he had taken such an interest in dress. "Does your ladyship think I never do?" he replied, with mock gravity.

"Do you remember when my dear father's own hand wreathed a sprig of scarlet geranium in my hair, some ten years ago, when I was a vain and wilful girl?" replied the young Countess, without heeding his question, and looking up with fond affection in his face. "Ah, papa, no flower, even when formed of gems, ever gave me so much pleasure as that."

"Not even when placed within these glossy curls by St. Eval's hand? Are you not jealous, Eugene?"

"Not in the least, my dear sir," replied the Earl, laughing. "I have heard of that flower, and the good effects it produced."

"You have heard of it, have you? I should have fancied my Caroline had long ere this forgotten it."

Lady St. Eval smiled reproachfully as she quitted the room, and Mr. Hamilton, turning to Emmeline, took her hand fondly, and said, "Why does my Emmeline look so grave? Does she not approve of her father taking an interest in her dress? But it is not for me I wish you to look pretty to-night, I will confess; for another, Emmeline, one whom I expect you will, for my sake, do all in your power to please, and—and love. Do not start, my child, the task will not be very difficult." He kissed her cheek with a cheerful smile, and left her, motionless and pale, every feature expressive of passive endurance, her hands clasped tightly on her heart. Emmeline sat before her mirror, and permitted Fanny to arrange her beautiful hair as she would; to her it mattered not. The

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words of her father alone rung in her ears. That night sealed her fate. Fanny spoke, for she was alarmed at her young lady's manner, but Emmeline answered as if she had heard her not, and the business of the toilette passed in silence. Yet so well had it been performed, so fair and lovely did that gentle girl look, as she entered the drawing-room, that every eye was fixed on her in admiration. The graceful folds of an India muslin dress enveloped her slight form, and a wreath of lilies of the valley, twined with the smallest pink rose-buds, confined her luxuriant hair; a scarcely perceptible blush was on her cheeks, and her eyes, continually wandering round the room, as if in search for some unseen object, shone with unusual brilliancy. Her father whispered, as he found himself near her—

"I do not expect my friend will arrive till late, my little Emmy, but look as pretty then as you do now, and I shall be satisfied."

She was relieved, but intelligence met her ear, ere dinner was concluded, that rendered it a fearful struggle to retain her composure. Mrs. Cameron's family, Mr. Howard, and one or two others, she knew were coming in the evening, but that Lord St. Eval expected his brother Louis to arrive at Oakwood, by eight or nine o'clock that same evening, was indeed information startling in the extreme. Would he not be accompanied by his preceptor? Would she not see him, from whom she had been so long parted? see him, to whom her heart was given, and in his presence be introduced to the husband of her parent's choice?

Mrs. Hamilton watched her with extreme uneasiness, and when dinner was over, whispered, as it seemed, an earnest entreaty in her husband's ear. He shook his head in sportive refusal; she still appeared anxious, but acquiesced. The hours passed on. Emmeline for a few minutes had retired, for the happiness, the gayety around her, pressed with overpowering heaviness on her heart; she had turned from it almost unconsciously. "Why, oh, why did I not confess to mamma that I could not wed another, because I still loved Arthur? why was I so foolish as to fear to confess the truth, we should not then have met? Why have I been so weak, to hide these miserable feelings even from my mother? how can I expect her sympathy, when she knows them not?"

So she thought, but it was now too late. The affectionate caresses, the kind voice of her cousin Ellen aroused her; con-

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trolling herself, she took Ellen's arm, and together they entered the drawing-room. She saw no strangers, all were familiar to her eye, and rallying her spirits, she entered into conversation with St. Eval, who hastened up to her as she entered. Ellen joined the dancers.

"I wonder why we all seem so gay and happy to-night," said St. Eval. "Look at Captain Cameron and our pretty demure cousin Ellen, Emmeline; I never saw such devotion in my life. Take my word for it, that will be a match one of these days, and a very pretty one. Cameron is a good fellow, and if ever any one were smitten, he is."

"But Ellen's admiration of his character is rather too open and freely expressed for him to hope his affection, if he do love, is returned. No, Eugene, Captain Cameron may be attracted, I grant you, but I do not fancy he will be Ellen's choice."

"Do you know any whom you think will?"

"What a question," she said, smiling, "to tempt me to betray my cousin's secrets, if she had any, but candidly I must admit that as yet I know none. It is a strange fancy, but I often think Ellen will be an old maid."

"Why, is she so precise, so prim, so opinionated, so crabbed? For shame, Emmeline, even to hint such a thing."

"Nay, St. Eval, the shame is rather yours, for daring to associate such terms with a single woman. To go through life alone, without sympathy, without any call for natural affections, always appears at first sight rather melancholy than otherwise; but why should dislike and prejudice be added to them? I cannot think that a woman's remaining unmarried is any proof of her being unamiable."

"Indeed, I am not so unjust," said the Earl, smiling; "when old maids conduct themselves properly, I esteem them quite as much and more than some married women. But still Ellen shall not be an old maid; she is too pretty and too good, and would bless any man who may be happy enough to gain her affections and esteem. But you, Emmeline, you, surely, will not be an old maid, though you are so warm in their defence."

"My lot is not in my own hands—do not speak of that, Eugene," she said, with a quivering lip; and hastily turning from his gaze, she added, "as you seem to know every body's concerns in the room, what are Mrs. Cameron and Florence talking so intently about?"

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"On the old subject: my madcap brother Louis and his sage tutor. By the by, Emmy, I have never asked what you think of Myrvin's conduct in this affair; did he not behave admirably?"

"He did but his duty," replied Emmeline, firmly. "He acted but as every man of generous feelings would have done; it was his duty, for he had pledged himself to the care of his pupil, and could he have left him in his sickness? The dictates of common humanity, the social duties of life would have prevented him."

"What a pity Florence does not hear you; such calm reasoning would destroy all the glow of romance which she has thrown around these incidents. But indeed you do not give Myrvin his due, every man does not perform his duty."

"Every man *ought*, and when he does not, he is wrong; as when he does, he is right."

"But this is contrary to your own principle, Emmeline. What has become of the enthusiasm which once bade you condemn all such cold judgments, such scanty praise? Once upon a time, you would have looked on such conduct very differently."

Emmeline turned away, but St. Eval saw her eyes were swimming in tears. He continued, sportively—

"Be assured, I will tell Myrvin as soon as I see him."

"I beg you will not, my Lord," Emmeline said, struggling to retain her calmness; but failing, she added, entreatingly, "dearest Eugene, if you have any regard for me, do not repeat my words; let them pass with the subject, it has engrossed us quite enough."

St. Eval shook his head in playful reproof. They sat apart from the dancers, and feeling neither her words nor any subsequent agitation could be remarked, she placed her trembling hand in St. Eval's, and said, almost inarticulately—

"Eugene, tell me, does Arthur—Mr. Myrvin, accompany Lord Louis to-night? Do not deceive me."

"He does," he replied instantly, "and what detains them I cannot understand. But fear nothing, dearest Emmeline, I know all; you may trust me, fear nothing. And now your promise—the quadrille is formed, they only wait for us."

"I know all, fear nothing," Emmeline internally repeated, her whole frame trembling with agitation, as kindly and encouragingly St. Eval led her to the place assigned them. She forced herself to think only on the dance, on the amusing an

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ecdotes he was telling her, on the light laugh, the ready jest that were sparkling around her. Her natural grace in dancing forsook her not, nor did she refuse her sister's request, when the quadrille was finished, that she would take out her harp. She seated herself at the instrument, and commenced.

Music had not lost its charm; rapt in the exquisite air she was playing, it seemed to soothe her agitated feelings, and bid her forget her usual timidity. All were silent, for the air was so sweet, so plaintive, not a voice could have disturbed it; it changed to a quicker, more animated strain, and at that instant Emmeline beheld Edward and Ellen hastily rise to greet a young man, who noiselessly yet eagerly came forward to meet them: it was Lord Louis. Emmeline started; a strong effort alone enabled her to command herself sufficiently to continue playing, but her fingers now moved mechanically; every pulse throbbed so violently, and to her ear so loudly, that she no longer heard the notes she played. All was a mist before her eyes, and the animated plaudits that greeted her as she ceased, rung in her ears as unmeaning, unintelligible sounds. Lord Louis hastily advanced to lead her from the harp, and to tell her how very glad he was to see her again, though even his usually careless eye lost its mirthful expression, as he marked the alteration in his favorite companion. Emmeline tried to smile and answer him in his own strain, but her smile was sickly and faint, and her voice trembled audibly as she spoke. She looked round, fearing yet longing to see another, but Lord Louis was alone. His preceptor was not near him, but Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, St. Eval and Herbert had also left the room. Some little time passed in animated conversation, still Myrvin did not appear.

"You are wanted in the library, dearest Emmeline," said the young Countess St. Eval.

"Come with me, Emmeline; foolish girl, 'fear nothing,'" said the Earl, joyously.

"Smile, gentle one," he whispered, as she turned her beseeching glance towards him, "do not greet the husband your parents have selected for you with a countenance such as this; nay, fear nothing," he repeated, as her steps faltered, and every limb trembled at his words. Again he smiled as he had once before during that evening, and for the first time a gleam of sudden light darted across the bewildered mind of the agitated girl, but so dazzling were the rays, so overpowering the brilliancy, from the contrast with the deep gloom which had been

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there before, that she could not believe it real; she deemed it some wild freak of fancy, that sportive fancy which had so long deserted her. St. Eval hurried on, supporting rather than leading his companion. They reached the library, and Emmeline's agitation increased almost to fainting; she leaned more heavily on St. Eval's arm; though her heart beat almost audibly, and her cheek vied in its paleness with a marble statue near her, not a word betrayed her emotion. There were many lights within the library, a group was gathered round the centre table, but to Emmeline all was indistinct, not one amongst them could she recognize. Her father hastened towards her, he took her trembling hand in his, and led her gently forward.

"Look up, my beloved," he said tenderly; "we have sent for you to ratify the consent your mother and I have given given on condition, that if yours be withheld, ours also is void. But will the long years of silent love and uncomplaining suffering for your sake, plead in vain to one so gentle as yourself? Look up, my Emmeline, and tell me, if the fond affection. the tender cares of him whom we have chosen, will not indeed prove the best restorative we can bestow?"

She did look up, and the quick gushing flow of blood dyed her pallid cheek with crimson, and lit up her soft eyes with their wonted lustre. There was one tall, manly form beside her, gazing on her with such devoted love, that she saw not how pale were those expressive features, what a deep impress of long suffering was on that high and noble brow. She heard naught but that deep rich voice pronounce her name. and call her "his own, own Emmeline," for she had sunk in his extended arms, she had hidden her face upon his shoulder and wept.

"Are we forgiven, Emmeline, dearest?" said Mrs. Hamilton, fondly, after a long pause, which many mingled feelings had occasioned. Her child withdrew for a moment from the arms of her betrothed, and flung herself upon her neck. "Your father bound me by a promise not to reveal his secret, and I kept it well till this evening; for did you not deserve some punishment, my child, for believing even for a single moment your parents would have rewarded your unwavering discharge of a most painful duty, your unhesitating submission to our will, by forcing you to bestow your hand upon another, when your heart was already engaged? No, my own Emmeline, we could not have been so cruel. Take her, my dear Arthur;

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freely, fearlessly I consign her happiness to your charge, for indeed you have well deserved her."

We need not lift the veil from the brief interview which the consideration of Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton afforded to the lovers, it is enough that they were happy, happy in the consciousness not of present joy alone, but of duty unshrinkingly performed, of pain endured with unrepining fortitude; unalloyed in its purity indeed was their happiness, for it was the recompense of virtue.

When the tidings of what had passed were made known, there were few who did not feel as if some individual joy had been imparted. The universal sympathy occasioned by the happiness of a being so generally beloved as Emmeline shed new animation over the little party. And Ellen, the gentle, affectionate Ellen, did not she rejoice? She did, unfeignedly, sincerely, but there was a pang of bitterness mingled with it which she vainly struggled to subdue.

Can you consent to live in the humble vicarage of my estate, Emmeline?" whispered the young Earl in her ear, as she relinquished the arm of Arthur, whom Edward, Percy, and Ellen were eagerly surrounding. "You have often admired it. Will it serve you for a home, think you? if not, name what alterations you will like, and they shall be done, even as if Aladdin's wonderful genii had performed it."

"Dearest Engene," said Emmeline, "I feel it is to you, to your generous pleadings in Arthur's favor, I greatly owe this happiness. Will you not let me thank you for that, instead of asking more?"

"No, little fairy, I will do no such thing, for I only spoke the truth, and that, Emmeline, 'was but my *duty*,' and demands no thanks or praise whatever; and as I have selected my friend Myrvin to supply the place of my late vicar, who was promoted last week to a better living, to see every thing prepared for his comfort, and that of his wife, is also mine."

"Nay, spare me, dear St Eval; I will plead guilty of not giving Arthur his due, if you will promise me not always to torment me with duty. I was unjust and unkind."

"No, dearest Emmy, you were neither unjust nor unkind, you only said one thing. and meant another, and as I know *why* you did so, I forgive you."

Mrs. Cameron's family and the other guests having departed, and only Mr. Hamilton's own circle lingering in the drawing-room, some surprise was occasioned to all except Mrs.

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Hamilton and Percy, by Mr. Hamilton suddenly laying his hand gently on Herbert's shoulder, and saying earnestly, though somewhat playfully—

"One surprise and one cause for congratulation we might, I think, deem sufficient for *one* evening, but I intend being the happy messenger of another event, which may chance to be even more surprising, and certainly not less joyful. I beg you will all offer Mrs. Hamilton and myself your warmest congratulations, for the same day that gives us a new son will, I trust, bestow on us another daughter. This quiet young man intends taking unto himself a wife; and as it may be some little time ere we can bring her home from France, the best thing we can do is to anticipate two marriages in one day."

"Herbert, my true English bred and English feeling cousin, marry a French woman! by my good sword, you shall not," said Edward, laughing, when the universal surprise and joy which this information had excited had somewhat subsided. The eager question who was Herbert's choice, was asked by Caroline and Emmeline together.

"Fear nothing, Master Lieutenant," St. Eval said, ere Herbert could reply; "my wits, though a landsman, are not quite so blunt as yours, and I guess better than you do. Is it possible no one here can tell? has my demure brother Herbert's secret never been suspected? Caroline, what has become of your penetration; and Emmeline, your romance? Ellen, cannot you guess?"

"Yes," she replied, instantly, though as she spoke a sudden crimson rose to her cheek, which, though unnoticed, had been, while Mr. Hamilton spoke, pale as death.

"May you, may you be happy, dearest Herbert," she added, calmly, as she extended her hand to him; "few are so fitted to make you so, few can so truly sympathize in your feelings as Mary Greville."

"You are right, you are right, Ellen," said Lady Emily Lyle, as Herbert warmly pressed his cousin's hand, and thanked her in that low thrilling voice so peculiarly his own; and then, with a countenance radiant with animated joy, turned towards the little group, and thanking them for the joy with which his Mary's name was universally greeted, turned to Edward and asked, with a smile, if Mary were not sufficiently English to content him.

"Quite, quite; I would even go over to France for the sake

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of bringing her to England in my gallant Gem," replied the young sailor. "She is the best wife you could have chosen, Herbert, for you were ever alongside, even in your boyish days; and it would have been a sin and shame for you to have married any one else. Percy, why do you not follow such an excellent example?

"I—because a bachelor's life has not yet lost its charms for me, Edward! I like my own ease, my own pleasure best, and wish to be free a short time longer," replied the young man, stretching himself on a sofa, with a comic air of *nonchalance* and affectation; then starting up, he added, theatrically, "I am going to be a senator, a senator; and how in the world can I think of matrimony but as a state of felicity unsuited to such a hard-working fellow as I am, or rather mean to be?"

"I commend you for the correction in your speech, Percy," said his mother, smiling. *Mean* to *be* and *am* are two very different things."

"But in me may chance so to amalgamate as to become the same. Mother, who would believe you could be so severe? But I forgive you; one of these days you will regret your injustice: that smile says I wish I may. Well, we shall see. And now, lords and ladies, to bed, to bed. I have swallowed such large draughts of surprise to-night, I can bear no more. A kind good night to all. Myrvin," he called out from the hall, "if you are as early to-morrow as you were at Oxford, we will be off to Trevilion and inspect your new vicarage before breakfast, and back by night."

"Not to-morrow, Arthur," entreated Emmeline, in a low voice, as he followed her from the room.

"Not to-morrow, dearest," he replied, tenderly, as he drew her to his bosom, and bade God bless her.

The other members of the family also separated, Ellen one of the last, for lady Emily at first detained her in some trifling converse, and Mrs. Hamilton was telling her of something she wished her niece to do for her the next morning. Ellen was standing in the shade as her aunt spoke; all had left the room except Edward and themselves, and humming a lively air, the former was departing, when turning round to wish her sister good night, the light flashed full upon her face, and there was something in its expression, in its almost unearthly paleness, that made him suddenly start and cease his song.

"Merciful heaven! Ellen, what is the matter? You look like a ghost."

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"Do not be silly. Edward, there is nothing the matter. I am quite well, only warm," she replied, struggling to smile; but her voice was so choked, her smile so unnatural, that not only her brother but her aunt was alarmed.

"You are deceiving us, my dear girl, you are not well Are you in pain, dearest?" she said, hastening towards her.

"Ellen had borne up well when unnoticed; but the voice of kindness, the fond caress her aunt bestowed, completely overpowered her, and, sinking on a chair, she burst into tears.

"It is nothing, indeed it is nothing, my dear aunt," she said, with a strong effort checking the bursting sob. "I have felt the heat very oppressive all the evening; it is only that which makes me so foolish."

"I hope it is only the heat, my Ellen," replied Mrs. Hamilton, fondly, suspicion flashing across her mind, not indeed of the truth, but something near akin to it. For a few minutes Ellen leaned her head silently against her aunt, who continued bending over her, then returning her affectionate kiss, shook hands with her brother, assured him she was quite well, and quietly left the room.

"Now, then, I know indeed my fate," Ellen murmured internally, as her aching head rested on a sleepless pillow, and her clasped hands were pressed against her heart to stop its suffocating throbs. "Why am I thus overwhelmed, as if I had ever hoped, as if this were unexpected? Have I not known it, have I not felt that she would ever be his choice? that I was mad enough to love one, who from his boyhood loved another. Why has it fallen on me as a shock for which I was utterly unprepared? What has become of my many resolutions? Why should the task be more difficult now than it has been? I feel as if life were irksome to me, as if all I loved were turned to that bitterness of spirit against which I have striven, as if I could dash from my poor cousin's lips the cup of unexpected happiness she has only this evening tasted. Oh, merciful Father! forsake me not now; let me not feel thus; only fill my heart with love and charity; take from me this bitterness and envy. It is Thou that dispenseth this bitter cup. Father, I recognize Thy hand, and would indeed resign myself to Thee. Oh, enable me to do so; teach me to love Thee alone, to do Thy work, to subdue myself, and in thankfulness receive the many blessings still around me; let me but see *them* happy. Oh, my Father, let thy choicest

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blessings be his lot, and for me"—it was a bitter struggle, but ere the night had passed that young spirit had conquered, had uttered fervently, trustingly, heartfully,—"for me, oh, my Father, let Thy will be done." And Ellen joined the breakfast-table the following morning calm and cheerful; there was no trace of internal suffering, no sign to betray even to her aunt all that she endured. She entered cheerfully into all Emmeline's happiness, accompanied her and Arthur, with Lord and Lady St. Eval, to Trevilion, and entered into every suggested plan, as if indeed no other thoughts engrossed her. Arthur and Emmeline found in her an active and affectionate friend, and the respect and love with which she felt herself regarded seemed to soothe, while it urged her on to increased exertion. Mrs. Hamilton watched her anxiously; she had at first fancied Arthur was the object of her niece's regard, but this idea was not strengthened, and though she felt assured such was not the real cause of Ellen's agitation that eventful evening, she could not, and did not guess the truth.

The revealing a long-treasured secret, the laying bare feelings of the heart, which have so long been concealed, even to our dearest friends, does not always produce happiness; there is a blank within us, a yearning after something we know not what, and the spirit loses for a time its elasticity. It may be that the treasured secret has been so long enshrined in our innermost souls, we have felt it so long as only our own, that when we betray it to others, it is as if we parted from a friend; it is no longer our own, we can no longer hold sweet communion with it, for the voice of the world hath also reached it, and though at first its revealing is joy, it is followed by a sorrow. So Herbert felt, when the excitement of congratulation, of the warm sympathy of his friends had given place to solicitude and thought. Mary had been so long the shrine of his secret, fondest thoughts, he had so long indulged in delicious fancies, known to few others save himself, that now they had been intruded on even by the voice of gratulation, they would no longer throng around. It was strange that on this night, when his choice had been so warmly approved of by all his friends, when words of such heartfelt kindness had been lavished in his ear, that the same dull foreboding of future evil, of suffering, of death, pressed heavily on him, as in earlier years it had been so wont to do. He struggled against it; he would not listen to its voice, but it

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would have sway. Defined it was not indeed, but from its mystery more saddening. Herbert wrestled with himself in fervent prayer; that night was to him almost as sleepless as it was to his cousin Ellen, but the cause of her weary watching was, alas! too well defined. The bright sun, the joyous voices of his brother and cousin beneath his window, roused Herbert from these thoughts, and ere the day had passed, he had partly recovered the usual tenor of his mind, though its buoyancy was still subdued, and its secret temperament somewhat sad, but to his family he seemed as usual.

CHAPTER XVII.

Some weeks passed, and Emeline's health was rapidly returning; her spirits were more like those of her girlhood, subdued indeed by past suffering, but only so far subdued as to render her, if possible, still dearer to all those who loved her; and she, too, beheld with delight the color returning to her Arthur's cheek, his step regaining its elasticity; and there was a manly dignity about him now which, when she first loved, she had not seen, but which she felt rendered him still dearer, for she could look up to him for support, she could feel dependence on his stronger and more decisive character.

Each week confirmed Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton in the wisdom of their decision, by revealing more clearly Myrvin's character. He was more devoted to the duties of his clerical profession; pride, haughtiness, that dislike to mingle with his parishioners, had all departed, and as they observed how warmly and delightedly their Emmeline entered into his many plans for doing good, for increasing the happiness of the villagers under his spiritual charge, they felt that her domestic virtues, her gentle disposition, were far more suited to the wife of a clergyman, than to that life of bustling gayety which might perhaps, under other circumstances, have been her portion.

"Are there not responsibilities attached to a clergyman's wife?" she once asked her mother. "I feel as if so much depended upon *me* to render him respected and beloved, that I sometimes fear I may fail in my duty, and, through ignorance, not intentional, perhaps bring discredit on his name. Dearest mother, how can I prevent this?"

"These fears are natural to one of your character, my Emmeline, but they will quickly pass away. You would be

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more likely to fail in the duties of fashionable life, than in those which you will soon have to fulfil. Occupations which had you been more fashionably educated, must have been irksome, will to you remain the pleasures they have ever been, heightened and encouraged by the sympathy of your husband. A wife, to be truly happy and virtuous, must entirely forget *self;* a truth which the partner of a country clergyman should ever remember, as his family is larger, more constant in their calls upon her attention and sympathy, and sometimes her exertions are less productive of satisfaction and pleasure, than those of many other stations in life. Her own demeanor should be alike gentle, unassuming, persuasive, yet dignified, so that her actions may assist and uphold her husband's doctrines more than her language. You have but to follow the principles of Christianity and the dictates of your own heart, my Emmeline, and your duty will be done, almost unconsciously to yourself."

The only drawback to Emmeline's happiness was, that Lord and Lady St. Eval were obliged to leave England ere her marriage could be solemnized, the health of the latter prohibiting further delay. They did not expect to be absent much more than a twelvemonth, and the Earl, laughingly, told Emmeline, if she would defer her wedding till then, he would promise to be present; to that, however, none of the parties concerned seemed inclined to consent, and St. Eval owned he would much rather, on his return, see her comfortably settled at the Vicarage, where preparations were rapidly advancing. Percy, however, promised to defer his intended tour till his favorite sister should be Myrvin's bride, and Edward, on leaving to join his ship, declared, if wind and tide were not very contrary, he, too, would take a run down and dance at her wedding.

A short time after the departure of the Earl and Countess, and Edward, Ellen received from the hand of her cousin Herbert a letter, which for the moment caused her some emotion. She felt his eyes were fixed upon her with a peculiar expression, and shrinking from them, she was hastening to her own room to answer the letter there, when Herbert called after her,—

"Do not run away from me, Nelly; whatever be your answer, I am to be the bearer."

Returning instantly, she asked, with cheek suddenly paled and lip compressed, "Are you then aware of the contents of this letter, Herbert? are you in Captain Cameron's confidence?"

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"To both demands I am happy enough to answer yes, Ellen," he replied, smiling archly. "Captain Cameron has made me his father confessor, and in return, I have promised to use all my influence in his favor, to tell you what his letter may perhaps have but incoherently expressed: that he loves you, Ellen, devotedly, faithfully; that he feels life without you, however brilliant in appearance, will be a blank. I promised him I would play the lover well, and indeed, my dear cousin, his affection and esteem for you do not admit a single doubt."

"I am sorry for it," said Ellen, calmly, "very sorry, as it is not in my power to return those feelings, and consequently I am compelled to give him pain. I am grateful, very grateful for the high opinion, the kind feelings, his letter expresses towards me. I shall never cease to respect and value him as a friend, but more I cannot give."

"Nay, Ellen, take time to consider of his offer; do not refuse him at once thus decidedly. You say you respect him. I know you admire his conduct, both as a son and brother, and as a man, What objections are there so great as to call for this decided and instant refusal?"

"Simply because, as a husband, I can never love him."

"Never is a long day, Ellen. You surely have not so much romance in your composition as to refuse a young man possessing every virtue which can make a woman happy, merely because he does not excite any very violent passion? Do you not know there are some dispositions which never love to the full extent of the word, and yet are perhaps happier in the marriage state than those who do? Now you may be one of these, Ellen."

"It may be so," she said, still calmly, though a deep flush stained her cheek. Herbert had spoken playfully, but there was that in his words which, to a heart seared as was hers, was productive of intense suffering.

"It may be so, perhaps; I shall never meet one to love, as I believe a husband ought to be loved, yet that would not satisfy my conscience for accepting Walter. I trust I am not romantic, Herbert, but I will say, that the vow to love, honor, and obey, to think only of him, demands something more than the mere cold esteem which some may deem sufficient for happiness. Walter *is* an estimable young man, one who will make any woman happy, and deeply indeed I regret that he has chosen one who can only return his warm devoted affection with the comparatively chilling sentiments of friendship and

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esteem. I would not do his kind heart so much wrong as to accept him."

"But take time, Ellen, give him some hope. You can urge no objections against him, and his family are dear to you. He has told me that from his childhood he loved you, that your remembrance never left him, and when again he met you, his fanciful visions became a beautiful and palpable reality; give him, at least, some time for hope. It is impossible, with a heart disengaged as yours, to associate intimately with him and not love him."

"A heart disengaged as mine! how know you that, Herbert?" said his cousin, with a smile, which would have deceived the most penetrating eye. "Are you not presuming too far in your inspection of my heart, seeking, in rather a roundabout way, to obtain my entire confidence?"

"No, dearest Ellen, I speak and feel in this business, but as Edward would were he in my place; your happiness is as dear to me as it is to him. We have for very many years been to each other as a brother and sister, and, believe me, in urging your acceptance of this good young man, I seek but your welfare alone."

"I believe you, my dear cousin," replied Ellen, frankly holding out her hand, which Herbert warmly pressed. "But indeed, in this instance, you are deceived. An union with Walter Cameron would not form my happiness, worthy as he is—suitable as the world would deem such a match in all respects; and sorry as I am to inflict pain and disappointment on the companion of my childhood, as also, I fear, on his kind mother, I cannot be his wife."

"And if your affections be already engaged, far be it from me to urge you farther; but"—

"I said not that they were, Herbert," interrupted Ellen, steadily fixing, as she spoke, her large eyes unshrinkingly on her cousin's face. Herbert felt fairly puzzled, he could not read her heart; he would have asked her confidence, he would have promised to do all in his power to forward her happiness, but there was something around her that, while it called forth his almost unconscious respect, entirely checked all farther question. He did not fancy that she loved another, and yet why this determined rejection of a young man whom he knew she esteemed?

"I am only grieving you by continuing the subject," he said; "and therefore grant me your forgiveness, dearest Ellen,

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and your final answer to Cameron, and it shall be resumed no more."

"I have nothing to forgive, Herbert," replied Ellen, somewhat mournfully.

She sat a few minutes longer, in saddened thought, gazing on the open letter, and then quitted the room and sought her own. She softly closed the door, secured it, and then sinking on a low seat beside her couch, buried her pale face in her hands, and for a few minutes remained overwhelmed by that intensity of secret and tearless suffering. It was called forth afresh by this interview with her cousin: to hear his lips plead thus eloquently the cause of another; to hear him say that perhaps she was one of those who would never love to its full extent. When her young heart felt bursting beneath the load of deep affection pressing there, one sweet alone mingled in that cup of bitterness, Herbert guessed not, suspected not the truth. She had succeeded well in concealing the anguish called forth by unrequited love, and she would struggle on.

"Never, never shall it be known that I have given this rebellious heart to one who seeks it not. No, no, that tale shall live and die with me; no one shall know how low I have fallen. Poor Walter! he will think I cannot feel for his unreturned affection, when I know too well its pang; and why should I not be happy with him, why live on in lingering wretchedness, when, perhaps as a wife, new duties might rouse me from this lethargy? Away from Herbert I might forget—be reconciled; but swear to love Walter when I have no love to give—return his affection by indifference—oh, no, no, I will not be so guilty."

Ellen again hid her eyes in her hands, and thought long and painfully. Pride urged her to accept young Cameron, but every better feeling revolted from it. She started from that posture of despondency, and, with a bursting heart, answered Walter's eloquent appeal. Kindness breathed in every line she wrote—regard for his welfare—esteem for his character; but she calmly yet decidedly rejected his addresses. She was grieved, she said, most deeply grieved that any thing in her manner towards him had encouraged his hopes. She had acted but as she felt, looking on the companion of her early childhood, the son of her father's and her own kind friend, as a brother and a friend, in which light she hoped he would ever permit her to regard him. Hope found no resting-place in her letter, but it breathed such true and gentle sympathy and kind

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ness, that Walter could not but feel soothed, even in the midst of disappointment. Ellen paused ere she sealed her letter; she could not bear to act, even in this matter, without confiding in her aunt; that Captain Cameron had proposed and been rejected, she felt assured, report would soon convey to her ears. Why not then seek her herself? The task of writing had calmed her heart. Taking, therefore, Walter's letter and her own, she repaired to her aunt's dressing-room, and fortunately found her alone. Mrs. Hamilton looked earnestly at her as she entered, but she made no observation till, in compliance with Ellen's request, she perused the letters offered to her.

"Have you reflected sufficiently on your decision, my Ellen?" she said, after thanking her for the confidence she reposed in her. Have you thought well on the estimable character of this young man? Far be it from me to urge or persuade you in such an important matter as marriage, but you have not, I trust, answered this letter on the impulse of the moment?"

"No, aunt, I have not indeed. Herbert has been most earnestly pleading Captain Cameron's cause, and I have thought on all he has said, and the little I can bring forward to combat it, but still I have refused him, because as a husband I can never love him. I honor all his good qualities. I cannot remember one fault or failing in his character, which might render a wife unhappy. I grieve for his disappointment, but I should not think I was doing either him or myself justice, to accept him merely on these considerations. Herbert, I know, considers me romantic, and perhaps unkind towards his friend; but painful as such an idea is, I cannot act otherwise than I have done.'

"Do not let that idea, then, continue to give you pain, my dear girl; your manner towards Walter has never expressed more than kindness and friendly regard. If I had seen any thing like encouragement to him on your part, do you not think I should have called you to account long ago?" she added, with a smile, as Ellen, much relieved, kissed her in silence. "Our young folks have, I know sometimes in sport, allied your name with his, but I have generally checked them. Walter I certainly did fancy admired you, but I did not imagine the feeling so decided as it has proved. I will not blame your decision, though perhaps it may not be a very wise one. Marriage is too serious a thing to be entered upon lightly, and if you cannot love Walter as a husband, why you are quite right

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not to accept him. I am not so eager to part with my Ellen as to advise her marrying, whether she likes it or not. I shall soon have only you to cheer my old age, you know. Do not look so pained and sad, love; it is not thus young ladies in general refuse an offer. Go and give your letter to Herbert, tell him it has my unqualified approval, and then return to me. I marked some beautiful passages in one of our favorite authors the other day, and you shall read them to me. Now run away, and come back quickly."

Ellen obeyed gladly and gratefully, and was enabled playfully to return the smile with which Herbert received her letter and his mother's message. Mrs. Hamilton felt more and more convinced that her suspicions were correct, and that her niece's affections were unhappily engaged. She thought again and again who could be their object, and still she fancied it was Arthur Myrvin. She scarcely knew why herself, except from Ellen's agitation the night of his arrival at Oakwood, and engagement with Emmeline. That Herbert was the object, was to her so improbable, that the idea never crossed her mind. They had lived so long as brother and sister, they had from their earliest childhood so intimately associated with each other, Ellen and Edward were to her so like her own children, that not once did she imagine Ellen loved her cousin. She watched her closely, and she was more and more convinced that she had something to conceal. She was certain her decided rejection of Walter proceeded from her affections being already engaged, which had also blinded her to his attentions; and she was convinced also that Ellen loved in vain, and therefore, though she longed to console and soothe her, she resolved not to speak to her on the subject, and wring from her a secret which, when once betrayed, though revealed to her alone, might be still more painful to endure. Mrs. Hamilton's manner was so kind, so soothing, so calculated to support and strengthen, that Ellen more than once wondered whether her aunt had indeed discovered her secret; but she could not speak of it. She could not even to the being she loved best on earth, with the exception of one, thus lay bare her aching heart. Often and often she longed to throw herself in the arms of her aunt and weep, but she controlled the impulse, and bore on in silence and outward cheerfulness; strengthened in her efforts by the conviction that Herbert knew not, imagined not the truth.

Young Cameron was grieved and disappointed, for his love for Ellen was indeed sincere, but he could not mistake her let

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ter; he saw there was no hope, her expressions of friendship and kindness were soothing and gratifying, they prevented all bitterness of feeling, and he determined to preserve the friendship and brotherly regard which she so frankly proffered.

Mrs. Cameron was at first somewhat hurt at Ellen's decided rejection of her son, but she could not long retain any emotion of coolness towards her, she could not resist the affectionate manner of Ellen, and all was soon as usual between them. A visit with Percy to Castle Malvern, at Lord Louis's earnest entreaty, to Walter was an agreeable change, though it had at first been a struggle to rouse himself sufficiently. There the character and conversation of Lady Florence Lyle, to his excited fancy, so much resembled Ellen's, that unconsciously he felt soothed and happy. From Castle Malvern, he joined his regiment with Lord Louis, who had received a commission in the same troop, and by the time Captain Cameron returned to Oakwood, he could associate with Ellen as a friend and a brother. Above a year, it is true, elapsed before that time, and in that period events had occurred at Oakwood, as unexpected as they were mournful—but we will not anticipate.

Soon after Lord and Lady St. Eval's departure for Italy, Mr. Grahame, despite the entreaties of his friends, even the silent eloquence of Lilla's appealing eyes, put his resolution into force, and retired to Wales. He had paid to the last farthing all his misguided son's honorable and dishonorable debts; and this proceeding, as might be expected, left him so reduced in fortune as to demand the greatest economy to live with any comfort. To such an evil Grahame seemed insensible; his only wish was to escape from the eye and tongue of the world. A mistaken view with regard to his child also urged him on. Why should he expose her to the attentions of the young noblemen so constantly visiting at Mr. Hamilton's house, when, he felt assured, however eagerly his alliance would once have been courted, now not one would unite himself to the sister of a publicly disgraced and privately dishonored man? No, it was better for her to be far away; and though her mild submission to his wishes, notwithstanding the pain he knew it was to part from her friends at Oakwood, rendered her dearer to him than ever, still he wavered not in his resolution. The entreaties of Arthur Myrvin, Emmeline, and Ellen did, however, succeed in persuading him to fix his place of retirement at Llangwillan, so that all connection would not be so completely broken between them, as were he to seek some

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more distant part of the country. Llangwillan, Arthur urged, was scarcely known to the world at large, but it was to them, and they might hope sometimes to see them; for he, Emmeline, and Ellen would often visit his father. Grahame consented, to the great joy of his child, who felt more than himself the force of Myrvin's arguments.

"Mr. Myrvin is such a dear good, old man, you cannot fail to love him, Lilla," Ellen said, soothingly, as the day of parting neared. "You must ask him to show you the little cottage where the first eight weeks of my residence in England were passed, and make friends with the old widow and her daughter for my sake; you will find them willing enough to talk about us and my poor mother, if you once speak on the subject. And my mother's grave, dear Lilla, you will visit that sometimes, will you not? and not permit a weed to mingle with the flowers Arthur planted around it after we left, to distinguish it, he said, from every other grave. It shall be your charge, dearest Lilla, and Edward and I will thank you for it; he never goes to Llangwillan without passing an hour of each day by that little humble mound."

"Edward, does he ever come to Llangwillan?" Lilla suddenly asked, her tears checked, and every feature expressive of such animated hope, that Ellen looked at her for a moment in astonishment, and then smilingly answered in the affirmative. Lilla clasped her hands in sudden joy, and then, as if ashamed, hid her face, burning with blushes, on Ellen's hand. Her companion stooped down to kiss her brow, and continued talking of her brother for some time longer.

From that day Ellen observed Lilla regained her usual animation, her eye sparkled, and her cheek often flushed, as if from some secret thought; her spirits only fell at the hour of parting, and Ellen felt assured they would quickly rise again, and the first packet she received from Llangwillan confirmed the supposition. Mrs. Hamilton was surprised, but Ellen was not.

Preparations were now actively making for Herbert's visit to France, thence to bring home his betrothed. His father and Percy had both resolved on accompanying him, and Mrs. Hamilton and Emmeline and Arthur anxiously anticipated the return of their long-absent friends.

A longer time than usual had elapsed between Mary's letters, and Herbert's anxiety was becoming more and more intense. Two or three of his letters had remained unanswered;

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there were no tidings of either herself or her mother. St Eval had determined on not visiting Paris till his return from Switzerland, as his solicitude to arrive at his journey's end, and commence the prescribed remedies for Caroline would, he was quite sure, destroy all his pleasure. In vain his wife laughed at his hurry and his fears; much as he wished to see Mary, he was determined, and Caroline no farther opposed him. Through them, then, Herbert could receive no tidings; he had not heard since that event, which he believed would have been as much joy to Mary as to himself—his ordination. He struggled with his own anxiety that the intervening obstacles to his journey should not deprive him of serenity and trust, but the inward fever was ravaging within. Only one short week, and then he departed; ere, however, that time came he received a letter, and with a sickening feeling of indefinable dread recognized the handwriting of his Mary. He left the breakfast parlor to peruse it alone, and it was long before he returned to his family. They felt anxious, they knew not why; even Arthur and Emmeline were silent, and the ever-restless Percy remained leaning over a newspaper, as if determined not to move till his brother returned. A similar feeling appeared to detain his father, who did not seek the library as usual. Ellen appeared earnestly engaged in some communications from Lady Florence Lyle, and Mrs. Hamilton was perusing a letter from Caroline, which the same post had brought.

With a sudden spring Percy started from his seat, exclaiming, in a tone that betrayed unconsciously much internal anxiety—

"What in the world is Herbert about? He cannot have gone out without bringing us some intelligence. Robert, has Mr. Herbert gone out?" he called loudly to the servant, who was passing the open window.

"No, sir," was the reply; "he is still in his room."

"Then there will I seek him," he added, impetuously; but he was prevented by the entrance of Herbert himself, and Percy started from him in astonishment and alarm.

There was not a particle of color on his cheek or lips; his eyes burned as with fever, and his lips quivered as in some unutterable anguish.

"Read," he said, in a voice so hoarse and unnatural, it startled even more than his appearance, and he placed the letter in his father's hand. "Father, read, and tell them all—

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I cannot. It is over!" he continued, sinking on a stool at his mother's feet, and laying his aching head on her lap. "My beautiful dream is over, and what is the waking? wretchedness, unutterable wretchedness! My God, my God, Thy hand is heavy upon me, yet I would submit." He clasped his mother's hands convulsively in his, he drooped his head upon them, and his slight frame shook beneath the agony, which for hours he had been struggling to subdue. Mrs. Hamilton clasped him to her bosom; she endeavored to speak words of hope and comfort.

Silence deep and solemn fell over that little party; it was so fearful to see Herbert thus—the gentle, the self-controlled, the exalted Herbert thus bowed down even to the earth; he, whose mind ever seemed raised above this world; he, who to his family was ever a being of a brighter, holier sphere. If he bent thus beneath the pressure of earthly sorrow, what must that sorrow be? His family knew the depth of feeling existing in his breast, which the world around them never could suspect, and they looked on him and trembled. Myrvin raised him from the arms of his mother, and bore him to the nearest couch, and Mrs. Hamilton wiped from his damp brow the starting dew. Tears of alarm and sympathy were streaming from the eyes of Emmeline, and Myrvin resigned his post to Percy, to comfort her. But Ellen wept not; pale as Herbert, her features expressed suffering almost as keen as his, and yet she dared not do as her heart desired, fly to his side and speak the words that love dictated. What was her voice to him? *she* had no power to soothe.

Deep and varied emotions passed rapidly over Mr. Hamilton's countenance as he read the letter which had caused this misery. Percy could trace upon his features pity, sorrow, scorn, indignation, almost loathing, follow one another rapidly and powerfully, and even more violently did those emotions agitate him when the truth was known.

"It was an old tale, and often told, but that took not from its bitterness," Mary wrote, from a bed of suffering such as she had never before endured; for weeks she had been insensible to thought or action, but she had resolved no one but herself should inform her Herbert of all that had transpired, no hand but her own should trace her despairing words. They had lived, as we know, calmly at Paris, so peaceably, that Mrs. Greville had indulged in brighter hopes for the future than had ever before engrossed her. Mr. Greville spent much of

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his time from home, accompanying, however, his wife and daughter to their evening amusements, and always remained present when they received company in return. They lived in a style of more lavish expenditure than Mrs. Greville at all approved of. Her husband, however, only laughed good-humoredly whenever she ventured to remonstrate, and told her not to trouble herself or Mary about such things; they had enough, and he would take care that sufficiency should not fail. A dim foreboding crossed Mrs. Greville's mind at these words; but her husband's manner, though careless, preventing all further expostulation, she was compelled to suppress, if she could not conquer, her anxiety. At length, the storm that Mary had long felt was brooding in this unnatural calm, burst over her, and opened Mrs. Greville's eyes at once.

Among their most constant but least welcome visitors was a Monsieur Dupont, a man of polished manners certainly, the superficial polish of the Frenchman, but of no other attraction, and even in that there was something about him to Mary particularly repulsive. He had seen some threescore years; his countenance, in general inexpressive, at times betrayed that strong and evil passions were working at his heart. He was said to be very rich, though some reports had gone about that his fortune had all been amassed by gambling in no very honorable manner. With this man Mr. Greville was continually associated; they were seldom seen apart, and being thus the favorite of the master, he was constantly at the house. To Mrs. Greville as to Mary he was an object of indefinable yet strong aversion, and willingly would they have always denied themselves, and thus escaped his odious presence. Once they had done so, but the storm of fury that burst from Mr. Greville intimidated both; they felt some little concession on their parts was demanded to preserve peace, and Monsieur Dupont continued his visits.

To this man, publicly known as unprincipled, selfish, incapable of one exalted or generous feeling, Greville had sworn to give his gentle and unoffending child; this man he sternly commanded Mary to receive as her husband, and prepare herself for her marriage within a month.

As if a thunderbolt had fallen, Mary and her mother listened to these terrible words, and scarcely had the latter sufficient courage to inform her unpitying husband of their child's engagement with Herbert Hamilton. For Mary's sake she struggled and spoke, but her fears were not without foundation

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A horrid imprecation on Mr. Hamilton and his family burst instantly from the lips of the now infuriated Greville; he had chosen for many years to fancy himself deeply injured by that gentleman, and, with an oath too fearful to be written, he solemnly swore that Mary should never be the wife of Herbert: he would rather see her dead. Louder and louder grew his passion, but Mrs. Greville heard him not. Mary had dropped as if lifeless at his feet. She had sprung up as if to arrest the imprecation on her father's lips, but when his dreadful oath reached her ears, her senses happily forsook her, and it was long, very long before she woke to consciousness and thought. Mrs. Greville hung in agony over the couch of her unhappy child; scarcely could she pray or wish for her recovery, for she knew there was no hope. Her husband had let fall hints of being so deeply pledged to Dupont, that his liberty or perhaps his life depended on his union with Mary, and could she wish her child to live to be the wife of such a man, yet could she see her die? What pen can describe the anguish of that fond mother, as for weeks she watched and tended her senseless child, or the contending feelings that wrung her heart when Mary awoke again to consciousness and misery, and asked her in a voice almost inarticulate from weakness, what had happened—why she was thus? Truth gradually broke upon her mind, and Mary too soon remembered all. The physician said she was recovering, that she would quickly be enabled to leave her bed and go about as usual. Greville swore he would no longer be prevented seeing her, and Mary made no opposition to his entrance. Calmly and passively she heard all he had to say; what he told her then she did not repeat in writing to Herbert. She merely said that she had implored him to wait till her health was a little more restored; not to force her to become the wife of Dupont, till she could stand *without support* beside the altar, and he had consented.

"Be comforted, then, my beloved Herbert," she wrote, as she concluded this brief tale of suffering. "They buoy me up with hopes that in a very few months I shall be as well as ever I was. I smile, for I know the blight has fallen, and I shall never stand beside an earthly altar; all I pray is, that death may not linger till my father's patience be exhausted, and he vent on my poor mother all the reproaches which my lingering illness will, I know, call forth. Oh, my beloved Herbert, there are moments when I think the bitterness of death is passed, when I am so calm, so happy, I feel as if I had already reached

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the confines of my blissful, my eternal home; but this is not always granted me. There are times when I can think only on the happiness I had once hoped to share with you, when heaven itself seemed dimmed by the blessedness I had anticipated on earth. Herbert, I shall never be another's wife, and it will not be misery to think of me in heaven. Oh, no, we shall meet there soon, very soon, never, never more to part. Why does my pen linger? Alas! it cannot trace the word farewell. Yet why does it so weakly shrink? 'tis but for a brief space, and we shall meet where that word is never heard, where sorrow and sighing shall be no more. Farewell, then, my beloved Herbert, beloved faithfully, unchangeably in death as you have been in life. I know my last prayer to you is granted ere even it is spoken: you will protect and think of my poor mother; you will not permit her to droop and die of a broken heart, with no kind voice to soothe and cheer. I feel she will in time be happy; and oh, the unutterable comfort of that confiding trust. Once more, and for the last time, farewell, my beloved; think only that your Mary is in heaven, that her spirit, redeemed and blessed, waits for thee near the Saviour's throne, and be comforted. We shall meet again."

No sound broke the stillness when that sad letter had been perused. Mr. Hamilton had bowed his head upon his hands, for he could not speak of comfort; the long years of domestic bliss which had been his portion, made him feel bitterly the trial which the heart of his son was doomed to endure. And how was he to aid? Could he seek Greville, and condescend to use persuasions, arguments to force from him his consent? With clenched hand and knitted brow Percy stood, his thoughts forcibly drawn from the sufferers by the bitter indignation he felt towards the heartless, cruel man who had occasioned all. Mrs. Hamilton could think only of her son, of Mary, whom she had so long loved as her own child, and the longing to behold her once again, to speak the words of soothing and of love, with which her heart felt bursting. Emmeline could only weep, that such should be the fate of one whom from her childhood she had loved, and whom she had lately anticipated with so much delight receiving as a sister. For some minutes Ellen sat in deep and painful thought, then starting up, she flew to the side of her uncle, and clasping his hand, entreated—

"Go to Paris, my dear uncle—go yourself, and see this relentless man; speak with him, know why he has commanded

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Mary to receive this Dupont as her husband; perhaps you may render Herbert's claims as valuable in his eyes. He has no cause of strife with you; he will hear you, I know he will, his fury was called forth because he thought Herbert stood in the way of his wishes. Prove to him the happiness, the life of his child, of yours, depend on their union. He cannot, he will not refuse to hear you. Oh, do not hesitate, go to him, my dear uncle; all may not be so desperate as at this distance we may fancy."

"My father may as well plead to the hard flint as to Alfred Greville's feelings," muttered Percy. "Ellen, you know not what you ask; would you have my father debase himself to a wretch like that?"

"'Tis Mr. Greville who will be debased, and not my uncle, Percy. The world might think him humbled to plead to such a man, but they would think falsely; he is raised above the cringing crowd, who from false pride would condemn the child of virtue to misery and death, because they would not bear with the vices of the parent. Were Mary, were Mrs. Greville in any point otherwise than they are, I would not thus plead, for there would be no necessity. She could not be so dear to Herbert. I do not ask my uncle to humble himself; I ask him but to reason with Mr. Greville to convince him of his error."

"What says my Herbert?" demanded Mr. Hamilton, gazing with astonishment on his niece's animated features, and almost wondering at her unwonted eloquence.

"That she has spoken well, and may God in heaven bless her for the thought!" exclaimed Herbert, who had roused himself to listen to her earnest words, and now, with sudden energy sprung up. "Father, let us go. Ellen has spoken justly. He will listen to you, he will not hear my entreaties unmoved. I have never offended him; he is, indeed, a harsh and cruel man, one whom I would gladly shun, but the father of Mary. Oh, let us seek him, for her sake will we plead; he will wake from his dream, he will know he has been in error. Oh, my father, let us go. She may yet be saved to live and bless me."

He sunk back on the sofa, and burst into tears. Hope had suddenly sprung up from the dark void which had been in his heart. Mrs. Hamilton could not check that suddenly-excited hope, but she did not share it, for she felt it came but to deceive. She whispered gentle and consoling words, she spoke of comfort that she could not feel. But once his energies

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aroused, they did not fail him. To go instantly to Paris, to seek Mr. Greville, and plead his own cause, aided by his father's influence, acknowledge he had been wrong in not asking his consent before, such thoughts now alone occupied his mind, and Mr. Hamilton could not check them, though, even as his wife, he shared not his son's sanguine expectations. That he had once possessed more influence than any one else over Mr. Greville he well knew; but he thought with Percy, the dislike felt towards him originated from this, and that it was more than probable he would remain firm in his refusal to triumph over both himself and his son; yet he could not hesitate to comply with Herbert's wishes. Ellen's suggestion had roused him to exertion, and he should not be permitted to sink back into despondency, at least they should meet.

It would be difficult to define Ellen's feelings as she beheld her work, and marked the effect of her words upon her cousin. Not a particle of selfishness mingled in her feelings, but that deep pang was yet unconquered. Herbert's manner to her was even kinder, more affectionate than usual, during the few days that intervened ere they parted, as if he felt that she had drawn aside the dark veil of impenetrable gloom, and summoned hope to rise again; and could she see or feel this unmoved? Still was she calm and tranquil, and she would speak of Mary and of brighter hopes, and no emotion was betrayed in her pale cheek or in that tearless eye.

Percy accompanied his father and brother. They travelled rapidly, and a favorable voyage enabled them to reach Paris in a shorter time than usual. Mr. Hamilton had insisted on seeking Mr. Greville's mansion at first alone, and Percy controlled his own feelings. To calm the strong emotion, the deep anxiety, that now he was indeed in the same city as his Mary, almost overpowered Herbert; the struggle for composure, for resignation to whatever might be the will of his God, was too powerful for his exhausted strength. Sleep had only visited him by snatches, short and troubled, since he had received Mary's letter; the long interval which elapsed ere Mr. Hamilton returned was productive of even keener suffering than he had yet endured. Hope had sunk powerless before anxiety; the strength of mind which had borne him up so long was giving way beneath the exhaustion of bodily powers, which Percy saw with alarm and sorrow; his eyes had lost their lustre, and were becoming dim and haggard; more than once he observed a slight shudder pass through his frame, and

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felt his words of cheering and of comfort fell unheeded on his brother's ear. At length Mr. Hamilton returned.

"She lives, my son," were the first words he uttered, but his tone was not joyful; "our beloved and gentle Mary yet lives, and soon, very soon you shall meet, not to part on earth again."

Herbert gazed wildly in his face, he clasped his hands convulsively, and then he bowed his head in a deep and fervent burst of thanksgiving.

"And Greville," said Percy, impatiently, "has he so soon consented? father, you have not descended to entreaties, and to such a man?"

"Percy, peace," said his father, gravely. "With Mr. Greville I have exchanged no words. Thank God, I sought not his house with any hostile intention, with any irritation urging me against him. Percy, he is dead, and let his faults die with him."

"Dead!" repeated the young man, shocked and astonished, and Herbert started up. His lip quivered with the vain effort to ask an explanation.

It was even so; that very morning Greville had breathed his last, with all his sins upon his head, for no time had been allowed him either for repentance or atonement. A few days after Mary had written to Herbert, her father had been brought home senseless, and dreadfully injured, by a fall from his horse. His constitution, shattered by intemperance and continued dissipation, was not proof against the fever that ensued, delirum never left him. For five days Mrs. Greville and Mary watched over his couch. His ravings were dreadful: he would speak of Dupont, at one time, with imprecations; at others, as if imploring him to forbear. He would entreat his child to forgive him; and then, with fearful convulsions, appear struggling with the effort to drag her to the altar. Mary heard, and her slight frame shook and withered each day faster than the last, but she moved not from her father's side. In vain Mrs. Greville watched for some returning consciousness, for some sign to say he died in peace. Alas! there was none. He expired in convulsions; and scarcely had his wife and child recovered the awful scene, when the entrance of the hated Dupont roused them to exertion. He came to claim Mary as his promised wife, or send them forth as beggars. The house and all that it contained, even to their jewels, were his; for Greville had died, owing to him debts to an amount which even the sale

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of all they possessed could not entirely repay. He had it in his power to arrest the burial of the scarcely cold corpse, to stain the name of the dead with undying infamy; and he vowed that he would use his power to its utmost extent, if Mary's consent were not instantly given. Four-and-twenty hours he gave her to decide, and departed, leaving inexpressible wretchedness behind him, on the part of Mrs. Greville, and the calm stupor of exhaustion and despair pervading Mary's every faculty.

"My child, my child, it shall not be; you shall not be that heartless villain's wife. I have health; I can work, teach, do any thing to support us, and why, oh, why should you be thus sacrificed? Mary, Mary, you will live, my child, to bless your desolate and wretched mother. Oh, my God, my God, why hast thou thus forsaken me? I have trusted in thee, and wilt thou now thus fail me? To whom can I appeal—what friend have I near me?"

"Mother do not speak thus," exclaimed Mary, roused from the lethargy of exhaustion by her mother's despairing words, and she flung herself on her knees beside her, and threw her arms around her. "Mother, my own mother, the God of the widow and the fatherless is still our friend; He hath not forsaken us, though for a time His countenance is darkened towards us. Oh, He will have mercy; He will raise us up a friend—I feel, I know He will. He will relieve us. Let us but trust in Him, mother; let us not fail now. Oh, let us pray to Him, and He will answer."

The eyes of the good and gentle girl were lit up with sudden radiance. Her pallid cheek was faintly flushed; her whole countenance and tone expressed the enthusiasm, the holiness which had characterized her whole life. Mrs. Greville clasped her faded form convulsively to her aching bosom, and, drooping her head, wept long and freely.

"Father, I have sinned," she murmured; "oh, have mercy."

An hour passed, and neither Mary nor her mother moved from that posture of affliction, yet of prayer. They heard not the sound of many voices below, nor a rapid footstep on the stairs. The opening of the door aroused them, but Mary looked not up; she clung closer to her mother, for she feared to gaze again on Dupont. A wild exclamation of joy, of thanksgiving, bursting from Mrs. Greville's lips startled her; for a moment she trembled, yet she could not be mistaken, that

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tone was joy. Slowly she looked on the intruder. Wildly she sprung up—she clasped her hands together.

"My God, I thank thee, we are saved!" broke from her parched lips, and she sunk senseless at Mr. Hamilton's feet.

Emissaries of wickedness were not wanting to convey the intelligence very quickly to Dupont's ear, that Mrs. and Miss Greville had departed from the Rue Royale, under the protection of an English gentleman, who had stationed two of his servants at their house to protect Mr. Greville's body from insult, and given him information of all that took place during his absence. Furiously enraged, Dupont hastened to know the truth of these reports, and a scene of fierce altercation took place between him and Mr. Hamilton. The calm, steady firmness of his unexpected opponent daunted Dupont as much as his cool, sarcastic bitterness galled him to the quick. The character of the man was known; he was convinced he dared not bring down shame on the memory of Greville without inculpating himself, without irretrievably injuring his own character, and however he might use threat as his weapon to compel Mary's submission, Mr. Hamilton was perfectly easy on that head. Dupont's cowardly nature very soon evinced itself. A few words from Mr. Hamilton convinced him that his true character had been penetrated, and dreading exposure, he changed his ground and his tone, acknowledged he had been too violent, but that his admiration for Miss Greville had been the sole cause; expressed deep sorrow for Mr. Greville's melancholy end; disavowed all intention of preventing the interment of the body, and finally consented to liquidate all debts, save those which the sale of the house and furniture might suffice to discharge.

Scarcely could Mr. Hamilton command his indignation during this interview, or listen to Dupont's professions, excuses, defences, and concessions, without losing temper. He would not consent to be under any obligation; if M. Dupont could *prove* that more was owing than that which he had consented to receive, it should be paid directly, but he should institute inquiries as to the legality of his claims, and carefully examine all the papers of the deceased.

"It was not at all necessary," Dupont replied. "The sum he demanded was due for debts of honor, which he had a slip of paper in Greville's own handwriting to prove."

Mr. Hamilton made no further reply, and they parted with nothing decided on either side, Dupont only repeating his ex-

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treme distress at having caused Miss Greville so much unnecessary pain; that had he known she was engaged to another he would never have persisted in his suit, and deeply regretted he had been so deceived.

Mr. Hamilton heard him with an unchanging countenance, and gravely and formally bowed him out of the house. He then placed his seal on the lock of a small cabinet, which Mrs. Greville's own faithful English servant informed him contained all his master's private papers, dismissed the French domestics, and charging the Englishmen to be careful in their watch that no strangers should be admitted, he hastened to impart to his anxiously-expecting sons all the important business he had transacted.

Early the following morning Mr. Hamilton received intelligence which very much annoyed and startled him. Notwithstanding the vigilant watch of the three Englishmen stationed at Mr. Greville's house, the cabinet, which contained all his private papers, was gone. The men declared again and again no one could have entered the house without their knowledge or remove such a thing as that without some noise. Mr. Hamilton went instantly with them to the house; how it had been taken he could not discover, but it was so small that Mr. Hamilton felt it could easily have been removed; and he had no doubt that Dupont had bribed one of the dismissed servants, who was well acquainted with every secret of the house, to purloin it for him, and Dupont he instantly determined on charging with the atrocious theft. Dupont, however, had decamped, he was nowhere to be found; but he had desired an agent to receive from Mr. Hamilton's hands the payment of the debt he still claimed, and from this man it was endeavored by many questions to discover some traces of his employer, but all in vain. M. Dupont had left Paris, he said, the previous evening.

Mr. Hamilton was not satisfied, and, consequently, seeking an able solicitor, put the affair into his hands, and desired that he would use every means in his power to obtain the restoration of the papers. That Dupont had it in his power farther to injure the widow and child of the deceased he did not believe; he rather thought that his extreme desire to obtain them proceeded from a consciousness that they betrayed some of his own evil deeds, yet he could not feel easy till they were either regained, or he knew that they were destroyed. Mrs. Greville earnestly wished their recovery, for she feared they

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might, through the similarity of names, bring some evil on her son, towards whom her fond heart yet painfully yearned, though years had passed since she had seen, and many weary months since she had heard of him. Her fears on this head rendered both Mr. Hamilton and Percy still more active in their proceedings, and both determined on remaining at Paris even after Herbert and Mrs. Greville, with Mary, had left for England.

And what did Herbert feel as he looked on the fearful change in her he loved? Not yet did he think that she must die; that beaming eye, that radiant cheek, that soft, sweet smile—oh, could such things tell of death to him who loved? He held her to his heart, and only knew that he was blessed.

And Mary, she was happy; the past seemed as a dim and troubled vision; the smile of him she loved was ever near her, his low sweet voice was sounding in her ear. A calm had stolen over her, a holy, soothing calm. She did not speak her thoughts to Herbert, for she saw that he still hoped on; they were together, and the present was enough. But silently she prayed that his mind might be so prepared, so chastened, that when his eyes were opened, the truth might not be so terrible to bear.

CHAPTER XVIII.

It was indeed a day of happiness that beheld the arrival of Mrs. Greville and Mary Oakwood, unalloyed to them, but not so, alas! to those who received them. Mrs. Hamilton pressed the faded form of Mary to her heart, she kissed her repeatedly, but it was long before she could speak the words of greeting; she looked on her and on her son, and tears rose so thick and fast, she was compelled to turn away to hide them. Ellen alone retained her calmness. In the fond embrace that had passed between her and Mary, it is true her lip had quivered and her cheek had paled, but her agitation had passed unnoticed.

"It was *her* voice, my Mary, that roused me to exertion, it was her representations that bade me not despair," whispered Herbert, as he hung over Mary's couch that evening, and perceived Ellen busily employed in arranging her pillows. "When, overwhelmed by the deep misery occasioned by your letter, I had no power to act, it was her ready thought that dictated to my father the course he so successfully pursued"

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Mary pressed the hand of Ellen within both her own, and looked up gratefully in her face. A faint smile played round the orphan's lips, but she made no observation in reply.

A very few weeks elapsed before the dreaded truth forced itself upon the minds of all, even on her mother, that Mary was sinking, surely sinking, there was no longer hope. Devotedly as her friends loved her, they could not sorrow, before her they could not weep. She was spared all bodily suffering save that proceeding from debility, so extreme she could not walk across the room without assistance. No pain distorted the expression of her features, which, in this hour of approaching death looked more lovely than they had ever seemed before; her soft blue eye beamed at times with a celestial light, and her fair hair shaded a brow and cheek so transparent, every blue vein could be clearly seen. One thought alone gave her pain, her Herbert she felt was still unprepared.

He was speaking one day of the future, anticipating the time when the Rectory would receive her as its gentle mistress, and of the many things which occupied his thoughts for the furtherance of her comfort, when Mary laid her hand gently on his arm, and with a smile of peculiar sweetness said—

"Do not think any more of such things, my beloved; the mansion which will behold our blessed union is already furnished and prepared; I may seek it first, but it will be but to render it even yet more desirable to you."

Herbert looked on her face to read the meaning of her words; he read them, alas! too plainly, but voice utterly failed

"Look not on me thus," she continued, in that same pleading and soothing tone. "One mansion is prepared for us above; below, my Herbert, oh, think not it will ever receive me. Why should I hesitate to speak the truth? The blessed Saviour, to whose arms I so soon shall go, will give you strength to bear this; He hath promised that he will, my own Herbert. my first, my only love. My Saviour calls me, and to Him, oh, can you not without tears resign me?"

"Mary," murmured the unhappy Herbert, "Mary, oh, do not, do not torture me. You will not die; you will not leave me desolate."

"I shall not die, but live, my beloved—live, oh, in such blessedness! 'tis but a brief, brief parting, Herbert, to meet and love eternally."

"You are ill, you are weak, my own Mary, and thus death

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is ever present to your mind; but you will recover, oh, I know, I feel you will. My God will hear my prayers."

"And he will grant them, Herbert—oh, doubt Him not, grant them, even in my removal. He takes me not from you, my Herbert, He but places me, where to seek me, you must look to and love but Him alone; and will you shrink from this? Will that spirit, vowed to His service from your earliest boyhood, now murmur at his will? Oh, no, no; my Herbert will yet support and strengthen his Mary, I know, I feel he will. Forgive me if I have pained you, my best love; but I could bear no other lips than mine to tell you, that on earth I may not live—but a brief space more, and I shall be called away. You must not mourn for me, my Herbert; I die so happy, oh, so very happy!"

Herbert had sunk on his knees beside her couch; he drooped his head upon his hands, and a strong convulsion shook his frame. He uttered no sound, he spoke no word, but Mary could read the overwhelming anguish that bowed his spirit to the earth. The words were spoken; he knew that she must die, and Mary raised her mild eyes to heaven, and clasped her hands in earnest prayer for him. "Forsake him not now, oh God; support him now; oh, give him strength to meet Thy will," was the import of her prayer. Long was that deep, deep stillness, but when Herbert looked up again he was calm.

"May God in heaven bless you, my beloved," he said, and imprinted a long, fervent kiss upon her forehead. "You have taught me my Saviour's will, and I will meet it. May he forgive—" His words failed him; again he held her to his heart, and then he sat by her side and read from the Book of Life, of peace, of comfort, those passages which might calm this anguish and strengthen her; he read till sleep closed the eyes of his beloved. Yes, she was the idol of his young affections; he felt her words were true, and when she was gone, there would be nought to bind his spirit to this world.

It would be needless to lift the veil from Herbert's moments of solitary prayer. Those who have followed him through his boyhood, and traced his character, need no description of his feelings. We know the intensity of his earthly affections, the strength and force of his every emotion, the depth and holiness of his spiritual sentiments, and vain then would be the attempt to portray his private moments in this dread trial: yet before his family he was calm, before his Mary cheerful. She felt her

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prayers were heard; he was, he would be yet more supported. and her last pang was soothed.

Mr. Hamilton had returned from France, unsuccessful, however, in his wish to obtain the restitution of Greville's papers. Dupont had concealed his measures so artfully, and with such efficacy, that no traces were discovered regarding him, and Mr. Hamilton felt it was no use to remain himself, confident in the integrity and abilities of the solicitor to whom he had intrusted the whole affair; he was unaccompanied, however, by Percy, who, as his sister's wedding was, from Mary's illness, postponed, determined on paying Lord and Lady St. Eval a visit at Geneva.

As Emmeline's engagement with Arthur very frequently engrossed her time, Ellen had devoted herself assiduously as Mary's constant nurse, and well and tenderly she performed her office. There was no selfishness in her feelings; deeply, unfeignedly she sorrowed, and willingly, gladly would she have laid down her life to preserve Mary's, that this fearful trial might be removed from Herbert. To spare him one pang, oh, what would she not have endured? Controlled and calm, who could have guessed the chaos of contending feeling that was passing within; who, that had seen the gentle smile with which she would receive Herbert's impassioned thanks for her care of his Mary, could have suspected the thrill, the pang those simple words occasioned? Mary alone of those around her, except Mrs. Hamilton, was not deceived. She loved Ellen, had long done so, and the affectionate attention she so constantly received from her had drawn the bonds of friendship closer. She felt convinced she was not happy, that there was something heavy on her mind, and the quick intellect of a vivid fancy and loving nature guessed the truth. Her wish to see her happy became so powerful, that she could not control it. She fancied that Ellen might be herself deceived, and that the object of her affections once known, all difficulties would be smoothed. The idea that her last act might be to secure the happiness of Ellen, was so soothing to her grateful and affectionate feelings, that, after dwelling on it some time, she took the first opportunity of being alone with her friend to seek her confidence.

"No, dearest, do not read to me," she said one evening, in answer to Ellen's question. "I would rather talk with you; do not look anxious, I will not fatigue myself. Come, and sit by me, dear Ellen, it is of you that I would speak."

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"Of me?" repeated Ellen, surprised. "Nay, dearest Mary, can you not find a more interesting subject?"

"No, love, for you are often in my thoughts; the approach of death has, I think, sharpened every faculty, for I see and read trifles clearer than I ever did before; and I can read through all that calm control and constant smile that you are not happy, my kind Ellen; and will you think me a rude intruder on your thoughts if I ask you why?"

"Do you not remember, Mary, I was ever unlike others?" replied Ellen, shrinking from her penetrating gaze. "I never knew what it was to be lively and joyous even as a child, and as years increase, is it likely that I should? I am contented with my lot, and with so many blessings around; should I not be ungrateful were I otherwise?"

"You evade my question, Ellen, and convince me more and more that I am right. Ah, you know not how my last hour would be soothed, could I feel that I had done aught to restore happiness to one who has been to me the blessing you have been, dear Ellen."

"Think not of it, dearest Mary," said Ellen. "I ought to be happy, very happy, and if I am not, it is my own wayward temper. You cannot give me happiness, Mary; do not let the thought of me disturb you, dearest; kind as is your wish, it is unavailing."

"Do not say so, Ellen; we are apt to look on sorrow, while it is confined to our own anxious breasts, as incurable and lasting; but when once it is confessed, how quickly do difficulties vanish, and the grief is often gone before we are aware it is departing. Do not, dearest, magnify it by the encouragement which solitary thought bestows."

"Are there not some sorrows, Mary, which are better ever concealed? Does not the opening of a wound often make it bleed afresh, whereas, hidden in our own heart, it remains closed till time has healed it?"

"Some there are," said Mary, "which are indeed irremediable, but"—she paused a moment, then slightly raising herself on her couch, she threw her arm round Ellen's neck, and said, in a low yet deeply expressive voice—"is your love, indeed, so hopeless, my poor Ellen? Oh, no, it cannot be; surely, there is not one whom you have known sufficiently to give your precious love, can look on you and not return it."

Ellen started, a deep and painful flush rose for a moment to her cheek, she struggled to speak calmly, to deny the truth

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of Mary's suspicion, but she could not, the secret of her heart was too suddenly exposed before her, and she burst into tears How quickly will a word, a tone destroy the well-maintained calmness of years; how strangely and suddenly will the voice of sympathy lift from the heart its veil!

"You have penetrated my secret," she said, and her voice faltered, "and I will not deny it; but oh, Mary, let us speak no more of it. When a woman is weak enough to bestow her affections on one who never sought, who will never seek them, surely the more darkly they are hidden, the better for her own peace as well as character. My love was not called for. I never had aught to hope; and if that unrequited affection be the destroyer of my happiness, it has sprung from my own weakness, and I alone have but to bear it."

"But is there no hope, Ellen—none? Do not think so, dearest. If his affections be still disengaged, is there not hope that they may one day be yours?

"No, Mary, none. I knew his affections were engaged; I knew he never could be mine, and yet I loved him. Oh, Mary, do not scorn my weakness; you have wrung my secret from me, do not, oh, do not betray me. There is no shame in loving one so good, so holy, and yet—and yet—Mary, dearest Mary, promise me you will not speak it—I cannot rest unless you do; let it pass your lips to none."

"It shall not, my Ellen; be calm, your secret shall die with me, dearest," replied Mary, earnestly, for Ellen's feelings completely overpowered her, and bursting sobs choked her utterance.

"For me there is no hope. Oh, could I but see him happy, I should ask no more; but, oh, to see him miserable, and feel I have no power to soothe—when—" She paused abruptly, again the burning blood dyed her cheeks, even her temples with crimson. Mary's eyes were fixed upon her in sympathy, in love; Ellen fancied in surprise, yet suspicion. With one powerful effort she conquered herself, she forced back the scalding tears, the convulsive sob, and bending over Mary, pressed her trembling lips upon her pale brow.

"Let us speak no more of this, dearest Mary," she said, in a low calm voice. "May God bless your intended kindness. It is over now. Forgive me, dearest Mary, I have agitated and disturbed you."

"Nay, forgive me, my sweet Ellen. It is I who have given you pain, and should ask your forgiveness. I thought not of

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such utter hopelessness. I had hoped that, ere I departed, I might have seen the dawn of happiness for you; but I see, I feel now that cannot be. My own Ellen, I need not tell you the comfort, the blessed comfort of prayer."

For a few minutes there was silence. Ellen had clasped the hand of Mary, and turned aside her head to conceal the tears that slowly stole down her cheek. The entrance of Emmeline was a relief to both, and Ellen left the room; and when she returned, even to Mary's awakened eyes, there were no traces of agitation. Each week produced a visible change in Mary; she became weaker and weaker, but her mind retained its energy, and often her sorrowing friends feared she would pass from the detaining grasp of love, ere they were aware of the actual moment of her departure. One evening she begged that all the family might assemble in her room; she felt stronger, and wished to see them altogether again. Her wish was complied with, and she joined so cheerfully in the conversation that passed around, that her mother and Herbert forgot anxiety. It was a soft and lovely evening; her couch, at her own request, had been drawn to the open window, and the dying girl looked forth on the beautiful scene beneath. The trees bore the rich full green of summer, save where the brilliantly setting sun tinged them with hues of gold and crimson. Part of the river was also discernible at this point, lying in the bosom of trees, as a small lake, on which the heavens were reflected in all their surpassing splendor. The sun, or rather its remaining beams, rested on the brow of a hill, which, lying in the deepest shadow, formed a superb contrast with the flood of liquid gold that bathed its brow. Clouds of purple, gold, crimson, in some parts fading into pink, floated slowly along the azure heavens, and the perfect stillness that reigned around completed the enchantment of the scene.

"Look up, my Mary, and mark those clouds of light," said Herbert. "See the splendor of their hues, the unstained blue beyond; beautiful as is earth, it shows not such exquisite beauty as yon heaven displays, even to our mortal sight, nor calls such feelings of adoration forth. What then will it be when that blue arch is rent asunder, and the effulgent glory of the Maker of that heaven bursts upon our view?"

"Blessed, oh, how blessed are those who, conducted by the Lamb of God, can share that glory," answered Mary, with

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sudden energy. "Who can speak the unutterable love, which while the bounteous earth yet retains the traces of an awful curse, hath washed from man his sin, and takes from death its sting?"

"And it is this thought, this faith which supports you now, my Mary?" demanded Herbert, with that deep tenderness of tone so peculiarly his own.

"It is, it is," she answered fervently. "My sins are washed away; my prayers are heard, for my Saviour pleads, and my home is prepared on high amid the redeemed and the saved. Oh, blessed be the God of truth that hath granted me this faith"—she paused a minute, then added—"and heard my prayer, my beloved Herbert, and permitted me thus to die in my native land, surrounded by those I love!"

She leaned her head on Herbert's bosom, and for some time remained silent; then looking up, said cheerfully, "Do you remember, Emmeline, when we were together some few years ago, we always said such a scene and hour as this only wanted music to make it perfect? I feel as if all those fresh delightful feelings of girlhood had come over me again. Bring your harp and sing to me, dearest, those words you read to me the other day."

"Nay, Mary, will it not disturb you?" said Emmeline, kneeling by her couch, and kissing the thin hand extended to her.

"No, dearest, not your soft sweet voice, it will soothe and give me pleasure. I feel stronger and better to-night than I have done for some time. Sing to me, but only those words, dear Emmy; all others would neither suit this scene nor my feelings."

For a moment Emmeline hesitated, and looked towards her mother and Mrs. Greville. Neither was inclined to make any objection to her request, and on the appearance of her harp, under the superintendence of Arthur, Emmeline prepared to comply. She placed the instrument at the further end of the apartment, that the notes might fall softer on Mary's ear, and sung, in a sweet and plaintive voice, the following words:—

"Remember me! ah, not with sorrow,
'Tis but sleep to wake in bliss.
Life's gayest hours can seek to borrow
Vainly such a dream as this.

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"Ah, see, 'tis heaven itself revealing
To my dimmed and failing sight;
And hark! 'tis angels' voices stealing
Through the starry veil of night.

"Come, brother, come; ah, quickly sever
The cold links of earth's dull chain;
Come to thy home, where thou wilt never
Pain or sorrow feel again.

'Come, brother, come; we spread before thee
Visions of thy blissful home;
Heed not, if Death's cold pang come o'er thee,
It will but bid thee haste and come!"

Ah, yes, I see bright forms are breaking
Through the mist that veils mine eyes;
Now gladly, gladly, earth forsaking,
Take, oh, take me to the skies.

Remember me! though upward flying,
Still I wait love's last fond kiss,
Then, oh, farewell; my spirit's sighing
To behold its home of bliss."

The mournful strain ceased, and there was silence. Emmeline had adapted the words to that beautiful air of Weber's, the last composition of his gifted mind. Mary's head still rested on the bosom of Herbert, her hand clasped his. Evening was darkening into twilight, or the expression of her countenance might have been remarked as changed—more spiritual, as if the earthly shell had shared the beatified glory of the departing spirit. She fixed her fading eyes on Ellen, who was kneeling by her couch, steadily and calmly, but Ellen saw her not, for in that hour her eyes were fixed, as in fascination, on the form of Herbert, as he bent over his beloved. The dying girl saw that mournful glance, and a gleam of intelligence passed over her beautiful features. She extended one hand to Ellen, who clasped it fondly, and then she tried to draw it towards Herbert. She looked up in his face, as if to explain the meaning of the action, but voice and strength utterly failed, and Ellen's hand dropped from her grasp.

"Kiss me, Herbert, I would sleep," she said, so faintly, Herbert alone heard it. Their lips met in one long lingering kiss, and then Mary drooped her head again upon his bosom, and seemed to sleep so gently, so sweetly, her friends held their breath lest they should disturb her. Nearly half an hour passed, and still there was no movement. The full soft

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light of an unclouded moon fell within that silent chamber and gilded the forms of Mary and Herbert with a silvery halo, that seemed to fall from heaven itself upon them. Mary's head had fallen slightly forward, and her long luxuriant hair, escaped from its confinement, concealed her features as a veil of shadowy gold. Gently and tenderly Herbert raised her head, so as to rest upon his arm; as he did so her hair fell back and fully exposed her countenance. A faint cry broke from his parched lips, and Ellen started in agony to her feet.

"Hush, hush, my Mary sleeps," Mrs. Grenville said; but Mr. Hamilton gently drew her from the couch and from the room. Her eyes were closed; a smile illumined that sweet face, as in sleep it had often done, and that soft and shadowy light took from her features all the harsher tale of death. Yes, she did sleep sweetly and calmly, but her pure spirit had departed.

CHAPTER XIX.

It was long, very long, ere Mr. Hamilton's family recovered the shock of Mary's death. She had been so long loved, living amongst them from her birth, her virtues and gentleness were so well known and appreciated by every member. She had been by Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton so long considered as their child, by her betrothment with their Herbert, that they sorrowed for her as if indeed she had been bound to them by that tender tie; and her poor mother now felt desolate: her only treasure, her precious, almost idolized Mary, was taken from her, and she was childless, for of Alfred she had long ceased to receive intelligence. She bowed her head, earnestly striving for submission, but it was long, long ere peace returned; soothed she was indeed by the tender kindness of her friends; but what on earth can soothe a bereaved and doting mother? Emmeline, Ellen, Herbert, even Arthur Myrvin, treated her with all the love and reverence of children, but neither could fill the aching void within. On Herbert indeed her spirit rested with more fondness than on any other object, but it was with a foreboding love; she looked on him and trembled. It was a strange and affecting sight, could any one have looked on those two afflicted ones: to hear Herbert speak words of holy comfort to the mother of his Mary, to hear him speak of hope

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of resignation, mark the impress of that heavenly virtue on his pale features; his grief was all internal, not a word escaped his lips, not a thought of repining crossed his chastened mind. The extent of that deep anguish was seen alone in his fading form, in his pallid features; but it was known only to the Searcher of all hearts. He had wished to perform the last office to his Mary, but his father and Archdeacon Howard conjured him to abandon the idea, and suffer the latter to take his place. All were bathed in tears during that solemn and awful service. Scarcely could Mr. Howard command his voice throughout, and his concluding words were wholly inaudible. But no movement was observable in Herbert's slight and boyish form; enveloped in his long mourning robe, his features could not be seen, but there was somewhat around him that created in the breasts of all who beheld him a sensation of reverence. All departed from the lowly grave, but Herbert yet remained motionless and silent. His father and Myrvin gently sought to lead him away, but scarcely had he proceeded two paces, when he sunk down on the grass in a long and deathlike swoon; so painfully had it the appearance of death, that his father and friends believed for a time that his spirit had indeed fled to seek his Mary; but he recovered. There was such an aspect of serenity and submission in his countenance, that all who loved him would have been at peace, had not the thought pressed heavily on their minds that such feelings were not long for earth.

These fainting fits returned at intervals, and Mrs. Hamilton, whilst she struggled to lift up her soul in undying faith to the God of Love, and resignedly commit into His hands the life and death of her beloved son, yet every time she gazed on him, while lying insensible before her, felt more and more how difficult was the lesson she so continually strove to learn, how hard it would be to part from him, if indeed he were called away. She compared her lot with Mrs. Greville's, and thought how much greater was her trial; and yet, she, too, was a mother, and though so many other gifts were vouchsafed her, Herbert was as dear to her as Mary had been to Mrs. Greville. Must she lose him now, now that the fruit she had so fondly cherished, watched as it expanded from the infant germ, had bloomed so richly to repay her care, would he be taken from her, now that every passing month appeared to increase his love for her and hers for him? for Herbert clung to his mother in this dread hour of affliction with increasing fondness. True, he

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never spoke the extent of his feelings even to her, but his manner betrayed how much he loved her, how deeply he felt her sympathy, which said that next to his God, he leaned on her.

At first Mr. Hamilton wished his son to resign the Rectory and join his brother and sister at Geneva, and then accompany Percy on his travels; but mournfully yet steadily Herbert rejected this plan.

"No, father," he said. "My duties as a son and brother, as well as the friend and father of the flock committed to my charge, will be far more soothing and beneficial, believe me, than travelling in far distant lands. My health is at present such, that my home and the beloved friends of my infancy appear dearer to me than ever, and I cannot part from them to seek happiness elsewhere. I will do all in my power, by the steady discharge of my many and interesting duties, to preserve my health and restore peace and contentment. I seek not to resign my charge in this world till my Saviour calls me; His work has yet to be done on earth, and till He dismisses me, I will cheerfully perform it; till then do not ask me to forsake it.'

Mr. Hamilton wrung his son's hand in silence, and never again urged his departure.

There was no selfishness in Herbert's sorrow; he was still the devoted son, the affectionate brother, the steady friend to his own immediate circle; and to the poor committed to his spiritual charge, he was in truth, as he had said he would be, a father and a friend. In soothing the sufferings of others, his own became less bitterly severe; in bidding others hope, and watch, and pray, he found his own spirit strengthened and its frequent struggles calmed. With such unwavering steadiness were his duties performed, that his bodily sufferings never could have been discovered, had not those alarming faints sometimes overpowered him in the cottages he visited ere his duties were completed; and he was thankful, when such was the case, that it occurred when from home, that his mother was thus sometimes spared anxiety. He would walk on quietly home, remain some little time in his own chamber, and then join his family cheerful and composed as usual, that no one might suspect he had been ill.

Arthur Myrvin often gazed on his friend with emotions of admiration, almost amounting to awe. His love for Emmeline was the strongest feeling of his heart, and when for a moment he fancied her snatched from him, as Mary had been from

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Herbert, he felt he knew he could not have acted like his friend; he must have flown from scenes, every trace of which could speak of the departed, or, if he had remained, he could not, as Herbert did, have attended to his duties, have been like him so calm.

In the society of his cousin Ellen, Herbert found both solace and pleasure. She had been so devoted to the departed, that he felt he loved her more fondly than he had ever done, and he would seek her as the companion of a walk, and give her directions as to the cottages he sometimes wished her to visit, with a portion of his former animation, but Ellen never permitted herself to be deceived; it was still a brother's love, she knew it could never be more, and she struggled long to control, if not to banish, the throb of joy that ever filled her bosom when she perceived there were times when she had power to call the smile to Herbert's pensive features.

Percy's letters were such as to soothe his brother by his affectionate sympathy; to betray more powerfully than ever to Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton how dear to each other were their sons, how pure and consoling was the friendship subsisting between them, and on other points to give much pleasure to all his family. Caroline's health was much improved; her little son, Percy declared, was such a nice, merry fellow, and so handsome, that he was quite sure he resembled in all respects what he, Percy Hamilton, must have been at the venerable age of two years. He said farther, that as Lord and Lady St. Eval were going to make the tour of the principal cities of Europe, he should remain with them and be contented with what they saw, instead of rambling alone all over the world, as he had intended. At first Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton were somewhat surprised at this decision, but knowing the nature of their son, began to fancy that a certain Miss Manvers had something to do with it, the sister of Lord Delmont, the Earl St. Eval's most intimate friend, and the chosen friend of Mary Greville during her residence at Monte Rosa. In Lord Delmont's will he had left the Earl guardian of his sister during the year that intervened before her coming of age, an office which rendered St. Eval still more intimate with the family. On his way to Geneva he had heard from Miss Manvers of her mother's death, and that she was residing with an English family on the banks of the Lake. The information that her brother's friend, and indeed her own, with his wife and family, intended spending some little time at Geneva, was a source of

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so much pleasure, that after a little hesitation she accepted the earnest invitation of both the Earl and his lady, and gladly and gratefully consented to reside with them during their stay in Switzerland, and then accompany them on their intended tour.

The strong affection Percy bore his brother rendered him long unable to regain his usual mirth and flow of spirits, and he found the conversation of Louisa Manvers even more pleasing than ever. Mary had made her perfectly acquainted with Herbert, and therefore, though she had never seen him, she was well enabled to enter into the deep affliction the loss of his betrothed must have occasioned him. Percy could speak to her as often as he pleased of his brother and Mary, and ever found sympathy and interest attached to the subject. Thus the idea of travelling alone, when his sister's family offered such attractions, became absolutely irksome to him, and he was pleased to see that his plan of joining them was not disagreeable to Miss Manvers. Mr. Hamilton sent his unqualified approval of Percy's intentions, and Herbert also wrote sufficiently of himself to satisfy the anxious affection of his brother.

There was only one disappointing clause in Percy's plans, and he regretted it himself, and even hinted that if his sister still very much wished it, he would give up his intention, and return home in time to be present, as he had promised, at her wedding. He wrote in his usual affectionate strain both to Emmeline and Myrvin, but neither was selfish enough to wish such a sacrifice.

At Herbert's earnest entreaty, the marriage of his sister was, however, fixed rather earlier than she had intended. It was not, he said, as if their marriage was to be like Caroline's, the signal for a long course of gayety and pleasure; that Emmeline had always determined on only her own family being present, and every thing would be so quiet, he was sure there could be no necessity for a longer postponement.

"My Mary wished to have beheld your union," his lip trembled as he spoke; "had not her illness so rapidly increased, she wished to have been present, and could she now speak her wishes, it would be to bid you be happy—no longer to defer your union for her sake. Do not defer it, dear Emmeline," he added, in a somewhat sadder tone, "we know not the events of an hour, and wherefore should we delay? it will be such joy to me to unite my friend and my sister, to pour forth on their love the blessing of the Lord."

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There was something so inexpressibly sweet yet mournful in his concluding words, that Emmeline, unable to restrain the impulse, leaned upon his neck and wept.

"Do not chide my weakness, Herbert," she tried to say, "these are not tears of unmingled sadness; oh, could I but see you happy."

"And you will, my sweet sister; soon—very soon, I shall be happy, quite—quite happy," he added, in a lower tone, as he fondly kissed her brow.

Emmeline had not marked the tone of his concluding words, she had not seen the expression of his features; but Ellen had, and a cold yet indefinable thrill passed through her heart, and left a pang behind, which she could not conquer the whole of that day. She understood it not, for she *would* not understand.

Urged on, however, a few days afterwards, during a walk with Herbert, she asked him why he was so anxious the ceremony should take place without delay.

"Because, my dear Ellen, I look forward to the performance of this ceremony as a source of pleasure which I could not bear to resign to another."

"To another, Herbert; what do you mean? Do you think of following my uncle's advice, and resigning your duties for a time, for the purpose of travel?"

"No, Ellen; those duties will not be resigned till I am called away; they are sources of enjoyment and consolation too pure to be given up. I do not wish my sister's wedding to be deferred, for I know not how soon my Saviour may call me to Himself."

"May we not all urge that plea, my dear cousin?" said Ellen; "and yet in your sermon last Sunday, you told us to do all things soberly, to give due reflection to things of weight, particularly those in which temporal and eternal interests were united; not to enter rashly and hastily into engagements, not too quickly to put off the garb of mourning, and plunge once more into the haunts of pleasure." She paused.

"I did say all this, Ellen, I own; but it has not much to do with our present subject. Emmeline's engagement with Arthur has not been entered on rashly or in haste. She does not throw off the garb of mourning to forget the serious thoughts it may have encouraged; and though you are right, we none of us can know how soon we may be called away, yet, surely, it behooves those unto whom the dart has sped, the mandate

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been given, to set their house in order, for they shall surely die, and not live the usual period of mortals."

"But who can tell this, Herbert? who are so favored as to know the actual moment when the dart has sped, and how soon it will reach them? Should we not all live as if death were near?"

"Undoubtedly, we should so order our souls, as ever to be ready to render them back to Him who gave them; but we cannot always so arrange our worldly matters, as we should, did we know the actual moment of death's appearance; our business may require constant care; we may have dear objects for whom it is our duty to provide, to the best of our power, and did we know when we should die, these things would lose the interest they demand. Death should, indeed, be ever present to our minds; it should follow us in our joy as in our sorrow, and never will it come as a dark and gloomy shadow to those who in truth believe; but wise and merciful is the decree that conceals from us the moment of our departure. Were the gates of heaven thus visible, how tame and cold would this world appear; how few would be the ties that we should form, how insignificant would seem those duties which on earth we are commanded to perform! No, to prepare our souls to be ready at a minute's warning to return to their heavenly home, is the duty of all. More is not expected from those in perfect health; but, Ellen, when a mortal disease is consuming this earthly tabernacle, when, though Death linger, he is already seen, ay, and even felt approaching, then should we not wind up our worldly affairs, instead of wilfully blinding our eyes to the truth, as, alas! too many do? Then, should we not 'watch and pray' yet more, not only for ourselves, but those dearest to us, and do all in our power to secure their happiness, ere we are called away?"

Ellen could not answer. She understood too well his meaning; a sickness as of death crept over her, but with an effort she subdued that deadly faintness; she would have spoken on other things, but her tongue was parched and dry.

Engrossed in his own solemn feelings, in the wish to prepare his cousin for the truth, Herbert perceived not her agitation, and, after a minute's pause, continued tenderly—

"My own cousin, death to you is, I know, not terrible; why then should I hesitate to impart tidings which to me are full of bliss? The shaft which bore away my Mary, also entered my heart, and implanted in me the disease which no

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mortal skill can cure. Do not chide me for entertaining an unfounded fancy. Ellen, dear Ellen, I look to you, under heaven, to support my mother under this affliction. I look to your fond cares to subdue the pang of parting. You alone of all her children will be left near her, and you can do much to comfort and soothe not only her, but my father; they will mourn for me, nature will speak, though I go to joy inexpressible, unutterable! Ellen, speak to me; will you not do this, my sister, my friend?

"Give me but a moment," she murmured almost inaudibly, as, overpowered by increasing faintness, she sunk down on a grassy bank near them, and buried her face in her hands. Minutes rolled by, and still there was silence. Herbert sat down beside her, threw his arm around her, and pressed a brother's kiss upon her cold, damp brow. She started and would have risen, but strength failed; for a moment her head leaned against his bosom, and a burst of tears relieved her. "Forgive me Herbert," she said, striving at once for composure and voice. "Oh, weak as I am, do not repent your confidence. It was unexpected, sudden; the idea of parting was sharper than at the first moment I could bear, but it will soon be over, very, very soon; do not doubt me, Herbert." She fixed her mournful eyes upon his face, and her cheek was very pale. "Yes," she said, with returning strength, "trust me, dear Herbert, I will be to my aunt, my more than mother, ever as you wish. My every care, my every energy shall be employed to soften that deep anguish which—" She could not complete the sentence, but quickly added, "the deep debt of gratitude I owe her, not a whole life can repay. Long have I felt it long wished to devote myself to her and to my uncle, and this charge has confirmed me in my resolution. Yes, dearest Herbert, while Ellen lives, never, never shall my beloved aunt be lonely."

Herbert understood not the entire signification of his cousin's words; he knew not, that simple as they were to his ears, to her they were a vow sacred and irrevocable. She knew she could never, never love another, and there was something strangely soothing in the thought, that it was his last request that consecrated her to his mother, to her benefactress. To feel that, in endeavoring to repay the debt of gratitude she owed, she could associate Herbert intimately with her every action, so to perform his last charge, that could he look down from heaven it would be to bless her.

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Herbert knew not the intensity of Ellen's feelings, still less did he imagine he was the object of her ill-fated affection. Never once had such a suspicion crossed his mind; that she loved him he doubted not, but he thought it was as Emmeline loved. He trusted in her strength of character, and therefore had he spoken openly; and could Ellen regret his confidence, when she found that after that painful day, her society appeared dearer, more consoling to him than ever?

Although some members of her family could not be present at Emmeline's wedding, a hasty visit from Edward was a source of joy to all. He was about to sail to the shores of Africa, in a small frigate, in which he had been promoted to the second in command, an honor which had elevated his spirits even beyond their usual buoyancy. He had been much shocked and grieved at his sister's account of Mary's death, and Herbert's deep affliction; but after he had been at home a few days, the influence of his natural light-heartedness extended over all, and rendered Oakwood more cheerful than it had been since the melancholy event we have narrated.

To Lilla Grahame it was indeed a pleasure to revisit Oakwood, particularly when Lieutenant Fortescue was amongst its inmates. Edward's manner was gallantly courteous to all his fair friends; a stranger might have found it difficult to say which was his favorite, but there was something about both him and Miss Grahame which very often called from Ellen a smile.

It was an interesting group assembled in the old parish church on the day that united our favorite Emmeline with her long-beloved Arthur, but it was far from being a day of unmingled gladness. Deep and chastened as was the individual and mutual happiness of the young couple, they could neither of them forget that there was a beloved one wanting; that they had once hoped the same day that beheld their nuptials would have witnessed also those of Herbert and his Mary.

Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton had looked with some degree of dread to this day, as one of painful recollection to Herbert; but he, perhaps of all who were around him, was the most composed, and as the impressive ceremony continued, he thought only of those dear ones whose fate he thus united; he felt only the solemn import of the prayers he said, and his large and beautiful eyes glistened with enthusiasm as in former days. It would have been a sweet group for a skilful painter, those three principal figures beside the altar. Herbert, as we have

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described him; Emmeline, in her simple garb of white, her slight figure and peculiarly feminine expression of countenance causing her to appear very many years younger than in reality she was; and Arthur, too, his manly features radiant with chastened yet perfect happiness, seemed well fitted to be the protector, the friend of the gentle being who so soon would call him husband, and look to him alone for happiness. Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton rejoiced that their beloved child was at length blessed in the gratification of her long-cherished, long-controlled hopes; that, as far as human eye could penetrate, they had secured her happiness by giving her to the man she loved. There was one other kneeling beside the altar on whom Mrs. Hamilton looked with no small anxiety, for the emotion she perceived, appeared to confirm the idea that it was indeed Arthur Myrvin who had engrossed the affections of her niece. There are mysteries in the human heart, for which we seek in vain to account; associations and sympathies that come often uncalled-for and unwished. Ellen knew not wherefore the scene she witnessed pressed strangely on her heart; she struggled against the feeling, and she might perhaps have succeeded in concealing her inward emotions, but suddenly she looked on Herbert. She marked him radiant, it seemed, in health and animation, his words flashed across her mind; soon would the hue of death be on that cheek, the light of that eye be dimmed, that sweet and thrilling voice be hushed on earth for ever; that beautiful form bent down as a flower, "the wind passeth over it and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more;" and thus would it soon be with him she loved. The gush of feeling mocked all her efforts at control, Ellen buried her face in her hands, and her slight frame shook, and the low choking sob was distinctly heard in the brief silence that followed the words, "Those whom God hath joined let not man put asunder."

Arthur, at Emmeline's own desire, conducted his bride at once to the small yet comfortable home which had been prepared for her in his vicarage on Lord St. Eval's estate. That her residence was so near them was a great source of pleasure to both her parents, and the feeling that her home was in the centre of all she loved, not only so near the beloved guardians of her infancy but Caroline and St. Eval, would have added to her cup of joy, had it not been already full to overflowing; the pang of parting was thus soothed to both mother and child. Even more than Caroline, Mrs. Hamilton felt she should miss

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the gentle girl, who scarcely from her infancy had given her one moment's pain; but in the happiness of her child she too was blessed, and thankfully she raised her voice to Him whose blessing, in the rearing of her children, she had so constantly and fervently implored, and the mother's fond and yearning heart was comforted.

Though Ellen had smiled, and seemed to every eye but that of her watchful aunt the same as usual the whole of that day, yet Mrs. Hamilton could not resist the impulse that bade her seek her when all had retired to their separate apartments. Ellen had been gone some time, but she was sitting in a posture of deep thought, in which she had sunk on first entering her room. She did not observe her aunt, and Mrs. Hamilton traced many tears slowly, almost one by one, fall upon her tightly-clasped hands, ere she found voice to speak.

"Ellen, my sweet child!"

Ellen sprung up, she threw herself into those extended arms, and hid her tearful eyes on her aunt's bosom.

"I have but you now, my own Ellen, to cheer my old age and enliven our deserted hearth. You must not leave me yet, dearest. I cannot part with you."

"Oh, no, no; I will never, never leave you. Your home shall be my home, my more than mother; and where you go, Ellen will follow," she murmured, speaking unconsciously in the spirit of one of the sweetest characters the Sacred Book presents. "Do not ask me to leave you; indeed, indeed, no home will be to me like yours."

"Speak not, then, so despondingly, my Ellen," replied Mrs. Hamilton, fondly kissing her. "Never shall you leave me without your own full and free consent. Do you remember, love, when I first promised that?" she continued, playfully; for she sought not to draw from Ellen the secret of her love, she only wished to soothe, to cheer, to tell her, however unrequited might be her affections, still she was not desolate, and when she left her, fully had she succeeded. Ellen was comforted, though she scarcely knew wherefore.

Some few months passed after the marriage of Emmeline, and the domestic peace of Oakwood yet remained undisturbed. There were times when Ellen hoped she had been deceived, that Herbert had been deceived himself. But Myrvin dared not hope; he was not with his friend as constantly as Ellen was, and almost every time he beheld him he fancied he perceived an alarming change.

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About this time a malignant disease broke out in the neighborhood of the Dart, whose awful ravages it appeared as if no medical aid was adequate to stop. In Herbert Hamilton's parish the mortality was dreadful, and his duties were consequently increased, painfully to himself and alarmingly to his family. A superhuman strength seemed, however, suddenly granted him. Whole days, frequently whole nights, he spent in the cottages of the afflicted poor; soothing, encouraging, compelling even the hardened and impenitent to own the power of the religion he taught; bidding even them bow in unfeigned penitence at the footstool of their Redeemer, and robbing death, in very truth, of its sting. The young, the old, men in their prime, were carried off. The terrible destroyer knew no distinction of age or sex or rank. Many a young child would cease its wailing cry of suffering when its beloved pastor entered the lowly cot, and with the fondness of a parent, with that smile of pitying love which few hearts can resist, would seek to soothe the bodily anguish, while at the same moment he taught the young soul that death was not terrible; that it was but a few moments of pain to end in everlasting bliss; that they were going to Him who had said "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." From the old, Herbert would learn many a lesson of piety and resignation, and feel that attendance on such beds of death was in truth a blessing to himself.

Fearlessly, for her trust was fixed on the Rock of Righteousness, did Ellen second the exertions of her cousin in this time of general affliction. There were many who sought to deter her, for they whispered the disease was contagious, but Ellen heeded them not, nor did Mrs. Hamilton, herself so active in seasons of distress, seek to dissuade her. "The arm of my God is around me, alike in the cottages of the dying as in the fancied security of Oakwood," she said one day to Herbert, who trembled for her safety, though for himself no fears had ever entered his mind. "If it is His will that I too should feel His chastening rod, it will find me though I should never leave my home; my trust is in Him. I go in the humble hope to do His work, and He will not forsake me, Herbert."

Herbert trembled for her no more, and an active and judicious assistant did he find her. For six weeks the disease continued unabated; about that time it began to decline, and hopes were entertained that it was indeed departing.

There was moisture in the eyes of the young minister, a-

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he looked around him one Sabbath evening on the diminished number of his congregation; so many of whom were either clad in mourning, or bore on their countenances the marks of recent suffering. Over the last victim the whole family at Oakwood had sincerely mourned, for it was that kind old woman whom we have mentioned more than once as being connected with the affairs we have related. Nurse Langford had gone to her last home, and both Ellen and Herbert dreaded writing the intelligence to her affectionate son, who was now in Percy's service. She had been buried only the day previous. Her seat was exactly opposite the pulpit, where she had so often said it was such a blessing to look on the face of her dear Master Herbert, and to hear such blessed truths from his lips. She now was gone. Herbert looked on her vacant seat, and it was then his eyes glistened in starting tears. He had seen his cousin look towards the same place, and though her veil was closely drawn down, he *felt* her tears falling fast and thick upon her book. More than usually eloquent was the young clergyman that day, in the discourse he had selected as most appropriate to the feelings of those present. He spoke of death, and, with an eloquence affecting in its pure simplicity, he alluded to the loss of those we love. "Wherefore should I say loss, my brethren?" he said in conclusion. "They have but departed to mansions of undying joy: to earth they may be lost, but not to us. Oh, no, God cursed the ground for man's sake—it is fading, perishable! There will be a new heaven and a new earth, but the spirit which God breathed within us shall not see corruption. Released from this earthly shell, we shall again behold those who have departed first; they will meet us rejoicing, singing aloud the praises of that unutterable love that redeemed and saved us, removing the curse pronounced on man, even as on earth, making us heirs of eternal life, of everlasting glory! My brethren, death has been amongst us, but how clothed? To us who remain, perhaps for a time in sadness; but to those who have triumphantly departed, even as an angel of light, guiding them to the portals of heaven. Purified by suffering and repentance, their garments white as snow, they encircle the throne of their Saviour; and those whose lives below were those of toil and long suffering, are now among the blessed. Shall we then weep for them, my friends? Surely not. Let us think of them, and follow in their paths, that our last end may be like theirs, that we may rejoin them, never again to part!

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"Are there any here who fear to die? Are there any who shrink and tremble when they think they may be the next it may please the Lord to call? My Christian brethren, think awhile, and such thoughts will cease to appal you. To the heathen alone is death the evil spirit, the blackening shadow which, when called to mind, will poison his dearest joys! To us, brethren, what is it? In pain it tells us of ease; in strife or tumult, that the grave is a place of quiet; in the weariness of exhausted spirits, that the end of all these things is at hand. Who ever found perfect joy on earth? Are we not restless, even in the midst of happiness? Death tells us of a purer happiness, in which there is no weariness, no satiety. When we look around on those we love, when we feel the blessings of affection, death tells us that we shall love them still better in heaven! Is death then so terrible? Oh, let us think on it thus in life and in health, and in the solitude and silence of our chamber such thoughts will not depart from us. Let these reflections pervade us as we witness the dying moments of those we love, and we shall find even for us death has no sting; for we shall meet again in a world where death and time shall be no more! Oh, my beloved brethren, let us go home, and in our closets thank God that His chastening hand appears about to be removed from us, and so beseech Him to enlighten our eyes to look on death, that so to give us that faith, which alone can make us whole, and give us peace, that we may say with the venerable Simeon, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'"

He ceased, and a solemn stillness reigned within the church. For a moment the young clergyman bowed his head in silent prayer upon his book, and then he raised his clasped hands on high, and, in a voice of almost unearthly sweetness and power, gave the parting benediction. The flush was observed to fade from his cheek, the lustre depart from his eye; he raised his hand languidly to his damp brow, and in another minute Mr. Hamilton darted from his seat, and received his son in his arms, in a long and deathlike swoon. That same evening beheld Herbert Hamilton, the beloved, the good, stretched on his couch a victim to the same fearful disease, to remove the sting of which he had so long and perseveringly labored.

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CHAPTER XX.

THERE was joy in the superb hotel at Frankfort-sur-Maine which served as the temporary residence of Lord St. Eval's family, domestic joy, for the danger which had threatened the young countess in her confinement had passed away, and she and her beautiful babe were doing as well as the fond heart of a father and husband could desire. They had been at Frankfort for the last two months, at which place, however, Percy Hamilton had not been stationary, taking advantage of this pause in St. Eval's intended plans, by seeing as much of Germany as he could during that time; and short as it was, his energetic mind had derived more improvement and pleasure in the places he had visited, than many who had lingered over the same space of ground more than double the time. Intelligence that Caroline was not quite so well as her friends wished, aided perhaps by his secret desire to see again her gentle companion, Percy determined for a short time to return to Frankfort, till his sister's health was perfectly restored, and they might be again enabled to travel together. His almost unexpected arrival added to the happiness of the young Earl's domestic circle, and there was somewhat in his arch yet expressive glance, as he received his baby niece from the arms of Miss Manvers, and imprinted a light kiss on the infant's sleeping features, that dyed her cheek with blushes, and bade her heart beat quick with an indefinable sense of pleasure.

The sisterly friendship of Louisa Manvers had been a source of real gratification to both the Earl St. Eval and his Countess during their travels, more particularly now, when the health of the latter required such kindly tending. Mrs. Hamilton had deeply regretted the impossibility of her being with her child at such a time; the letter Lord St. Eval had despatched was, however, calculated to disperse all her anxiety, the danger appearing after the letter had gone, and not lasting sufficiently long to justify his writing again. They were sitting round the breakfast table the morning after Percy's return, lengthening the usual time of the meal by lively and intelligent conversation; Miss Manvers was presiding at the table, and Percy did not feel the least inclined to move, declaring he would wait for his English despatches, if there were any, before he went out. The post happened to be rather late that morning, a circumstance, wonderful to say, which did not

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occasion Percy annoyance. It came in, however, at length, bringing several papers for Lord St. Eval and his wife, from the Malvern family, but only two from Oakwood, one, in the handwriting of Ellen, to Percy, and one for Robert Langford, evidently from Mr. Hamilton.

"This is most extraordinary," Percy said, much surprised. "My mother not written to Caroline, and none from Herbert to me; his duties are increased, I know, but surely he could find time to write to me."

"Mrs. Hamilton has written to Caroline since her confinement, and so did all her family four or five days ago," said Lord St. Eval, but his words fell unheeded on the ear of Percy, who had hastily torn open his cousin's letter, and glanced his eye over its contents. Engaged in his own letters, the Earl did not observe the agitation of his friend, but Miss Manvers saw his hand tremble so violently, that he could scarcely hold the paper.

"Merciful heaven! Mr. Hamilton—Percy, what is the matter?" she exclaimed, suddenly losing all her wonted reserve, as she remarked his strange emotion, and her words, connected with the low groan that burst from Percy's heart, effectually roused the Earl's attention.

"Hamilton, speak; are there ill news from Oakwood? In mercy speak!" he said, almost as much agitated as his friend.

"Herbert," was all Percy could articulate, "Herbert, my brother: oh, God, he is dying, and I am not near him. Read, St. Eval, for pity; I cannot see the words. Is there yet time—can I reach England in time? or is this only a preparation to tell me he is dead?"

"He lives, Percy; there may be yet time, if you set off at once," exclaimed the Earl, who saw the necessity of rousing his friend to exertion, for the sudden blow had bewildered his every faculty. He started up wildly, and was darting from the room, when he suddenly paused—

"Keep it from Caroline—tell her not now, it will kill her," he cried. "May God in heaven bless you for those tears!" he continued, springing towards Louisa, and clasping her hands convulsively in his, as the sight of her unfeigned emotion caused the hot tears slowly to trickle down his own cheek, and his lip quivered, till he could scarcely speak the words of parting. "Oh, think of me; I go to the dying bed of him, whom I had hoped would one day have been to you a brother—would have joined—" He paused in overwhelming emotion, took the

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hand of the trembling girl, raised it to his lips, and darted from the apartment.

St. Eval hastily followed him, for he saw Percy was in no state to think of any thing himself, and the letter Robert had received, telling him of the death of his mother, rendered him almost as incapable of exertion as his master; but as soon as he heard the cause of Percy's very visible but at first incomprehensible agitation, his own deep affliction was at once subdued; he was ready and active in Percy's service. That Mr. Hamilton should thus have written to him, to alleviate the blow of a parent's death, to comfort him when his own son lay on a dying bed, penetrated at once the heart of the young man, and urged him to exertion.

Day and night Percy travelled; but we must outstrip even his rapid course, and conduct our readers to Oakwood, the evening of the second day after Percy's arrival at Ostend.

Herbert Hamilton lay on his couch, the cold hand of Death upon his brow; but instead of robing his features with a ghastly hue, it had spread over them even more than usual beauty. Reduced he was to a mere shadow, but his prayers in his days of health and life had been heard; the delirium of fever had passed, and he met death unshrinkingly, his mind retaining even more than its wonted powers. It was the Sabbath evening, and all around him was still and calm. For the first two days after the delirium had departed, his mind had still been darkened, restless, and uneasy. Perseveringly as he had labored in his calling, he had felt in those darker days the utter nothingness of his own works, how wholly insufficient they had been to secure his salvation; and the love of his God, the infinite atonement in which he so steadily believed, shone not with sufficient brightness to remove this painful darkness. Death was very near, and it no longer seemed the angel of light he had ever regarded it; but on the Saturday the mist was mercifully dispelled from his mind, the clouds dispersed, and faith shone forth with a brilliancy, a lustre overpowering; it told of heaven with an eloquence that banished every other thought, and Herbert's bodily sufferings were felt no longer; the confines of heaven were gained—but a brief space, one mortal struggle, and he would meet his Mary at the footstool of his God.

With solemn impressiveness, yet affecting tenderness, Archdeacon Howard had administered the sacrament to him, whom he regarded at once as pupil, friend, and brother; and the

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whole family of the dying youth, at his own particular request, had shared it with him. Exhausted by the earnestness in which he had joined in the solemn service, Herbert now lay with one hand clasped in his mother's, who sat by his side, her head bent over his, and her whole countenance, save when the gaze of her son was turned towards her, expressive of tearless, heart-rending sorrow, struggling for resignation to the will of Him, who called her Herbert to Himself. Emmeline was kneeling by her mother's side. Mr. Hamilton leaned against the wall, pale and still; it was only the agonized expression of his manly features that betrayed he was a living being. On the left side of the dying youth, stood Arthur Myrvin, who, from the moment of his arrival at Oakwood, had never once left Herbert's couch, night and day he remained beside him; and near Arthur, but yet closer to her cousin, knelt the orphan, her eyes tearless indeed, but her whole countenance so haggard and wan, that had not all been engrossed in individual suffering, it could not have passed unobserved. The tall, venerable figure of the Archdeacon, as he stood a little aloof from the principal figures, completed the painful group.

"My own mother, your Herbert is so happy, so very happy! you must not weep for me, mother. Oh, it is your fostering love and care, the remembrance of all your tenderness from my infancy, gilding my boyhood with sunshine, my manhood with such refreshing rays—it is that which is resting on my heart, and I would give it words, and thank and bless you, but I cannot. And my father, too, my beloved, my revered father—oh, but little have I done to repay your tender care, my brother and sister's love, but my Father in heaven will bless—bless you all; I know, I feel He will."

"Percy," repeated the dying youth, a gleam of light kindling in his eye and flushing his cheek. "Is there indeed a hope that I may see him, that I may trace those beloved features once again?"

He closed his eyes, and his lips moved in silent yet fervent prayer; that wish was still powerful within; it was the only thought of earth that lingered.

"Tell him," he said, and his voice sounded weaker and weaker, "tell him, Herbert's last prayer was for him, that he was in my last thoughts; tell him to seek comfort at the foot of that Throne where we have so often knelt together. Oh, let him not sorrow, for I shall be happy—oh, so happy!"

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Again he was silent, and for a much longer interval; but when he reopened his eyes, they were fixed on Ellen.

"My sister, my kind and tender nurse, what shall I say to you?" he said, languidly, but in a tone that thrilled to her aching heart. "I can but commend you to His care, who can take from grief its sting, even as He hath clothed this moment in victory. May his Spirit rest upon you, Ellen, and give you peace. May he bless you, not only for your affectionate kindness towards me, but to her who went before me. You will not forget, Ellen." His glance wandered from his cousin to his mother, and then returned to her. She bowed her head upon his extended hand, but her choking voice could speak no word.

Caroline, too, she will weep for me, but St. Eval will dry her tears; tell them I did not forget them; that my love and blessing is theirs even as if they had been around me. Emmeline, Arthur,—Mr. Howard, oh, where are you? my eyes are dim, my voice is failing, yet"—

"I am here, my beloved son," said the Archdeacon, and Herbert fixed a kind glance upon his face, and leaned his head against him.

"I would tell you, that it is the sense of the Divine presence, of love, unutterable, infinite, inexhaustible, that has taken all anguish from this moment. My spirit rises triumphant, secure of eternal salvation, triumphing in the love of Him who died for me. Oh, Death, well may I say, where is thy sting? oh, grave, where is thy victory? they are passed; heaven is opening. Oh, bliss unutterable, undying!" He sunk back utterly exhausted, but the expression of his countenance still evinced the internal triumph of his soul.

"A faint sound, as of the distant trampling of horses, suddenly came upon the ear. Nearer, nearer still, and a flush of excitement rose to Herbert's cheek. "Percy—can it be? My God, I thank thee for this mercy!"

Arthur darted from the room, as the sound appeared rapidly approaching; evidently it was a horse urged to its utmost speed, and it could be none other save Percy. Arthur flew across the hall, and through the entrance, which had been flung widely open, as the figure of the young heir of Oakwood had been recognized by the streaming eyes of the faithful Morris, who stood by his young master's stirrup, but

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without uttering a word. Percy's tongue clove to the roof of his mouth; his eyes were bloodshot and haggard. He had no power to ask a question, and it was only the appearance of Myrvin, his entreaty that he would be calm ere Herbert saw him, that roused him to exertion. His brother yet lived; it was enough, and in another minute he stood on the threshold of Herbert's room. With an overpowering effort the dying youth raised himself on his couch, and extended his arms towards him.

"Percy, my own Percy, this is kind," he said, and his voice suddenly regained its wonted power. Percy sprung towards him, and the brothers were clasped in each other's arms. No word did Percy speak, but his choking sobs were heard; there was no movement in the drooping form of his brother to say that he had heard the sound; he did not raise his head from Percy's shoulder, or seek to speak of comfort.

"Speak to me, oh, once again, but once more, Herbert!" exclaimed Percy. Fearful agony was in his voice, but, oh, it could not rouse the *dead:* Herbert Hamilton had departed. His last wish on earth was fulfilled. It was but the lifeless form of his beloved brother that Percy held in the stern grasp of despairing woe. It was long ere the truth was known, and when it was, there was no sound of wailing heard within the chamber, no cry of sorrow broke the solemn stillness. For him they could not weep, and for themselves, oh, it was a grief too deep for tears.

* * * * * *

We will not linger on the first few weeks that passed over the inmates of Oakwood after the death of one we have followed so long, and beheld so fondly and deservedly beloved. Silent and profound was that sorrow, but it was the sorrow of those who, in all things, both great and small, beheld the hand of a God of love. Could the faith, the truth, which from her girlhood's years had distinguished Mrs. Hamilton, desert her now? Would her husband permit her to look to him for support and consolation under this deep affliction, and yet not find it? No; they looked up to their God; they rejoiced that so peaceful, so blessed had been the death of their beloved one. His last words to them came again and again on the heart of each parent as soothing balm, of which nor time nor circumstance could deprive them. For the sake of each other, they exerted themselves, an example followed by their children; but

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each felt years must pass ere the loss they had sustained would lose its pang, ere they could cease to miss the being they had so dearly loved, who had been such a brilliant light in their domestic circle—brilliant, yet how gentle; not one that was ever sparkling, ever changing, but of a soft and steady lustre. On earth that light had set, but in heaven it was dawning never to set again.

For some few weeks the family remained all together, as far at least as Arthur's ministerial duties permitted. Mr Hamilton wished much to see that living, now vacant by the death of his son, transferred to Myrvin, and he exerted himself towards effecting an exchange. Ere, however, Percy could return to the Continent, or Emmeline return to her husband's home, the sudden and alarming illness of Mrs. Hamilton detained them both at Oakwood. The fever which had been raging in the village, and which had hastened the death of Herbert, had also entered the household of Mrs. Hamilton. Resolved that no affliction of her own should interfere with those duties of benevolence, to exercise which was her constant practice, Mrs. Hamilton had compelled herself to exertion beyond the strength of a frame already wearied and exhausted by long-continued but forcibly-suppressed anxiety, and three weeks after the death of her son, she too was stretched on a bed of suffering, which, for the first few days during the violence of the fever, her afflicted family believed might also be of death. In this trying time, it was to Ellen that not only her cousins but even her uncle turned, by her example to obtain more control and strength. No persuasions could induce her to leave the side of her aunt's couch, or resign to another the painful yet soothing task of nursing. Young and inexperienced she was, but her strong affection for her aunt, heightened by some other feeling which was hidden in her own breast, endowed her at once with strength to endure continued fatigue, with an experience that often made Mr. Maitland contemplate her with astonishment. From the period of Herbert's death, Ellen had placed her feelings under a restraint that utterly prevented all relief in tears. She was never seen to weep; every feature had indeed spoken the deep affliction that was hers, but it never interfered with the devoted care she manifested towards her aunt. Silently yet perseveringly she labored to soften the intense suffering in the mother's heart; it was on her neck Mrs. Hamilton had first wept freely and relievingly, and as she clasped the orphan to her bosom, had lifted up her heart

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in thanksgiving that such a precious gift was yet preserved her, how little did even she imagine all that was passing in Ellen's heart; that Herbert to her young fancy had been how much dearer than a brother; that she mourned not only a cousin's loss, but one round whom her first affections had been twined with an intensity that death alone could sever. How little could she guess the continued struggle pressing on that young mind, the anguish of her solitary moments, ere she could by prayer so calm her bursting heart as to appear the composed and tranquil being she ever seemed before the family. Mrs. Hamilton could only feel that the comfort her niece bestowed in this hour of affliction, her controlled yet sympathizing conduct, repaid her for all the care and sorrow Ellen once had caused. Never had she regretted she had taken the orphans to her heart and cherished them as her own; but now it was she felt the Lord had indeed returned the blessing tenfold in her own bosom; and still more did she feel this in the long and painful convalescence that followed her brief but severe attack of fever, when Ellen was the only one of her children remaining near her.

Completely worn out by previous anxiety, the subsequent affliction, and, finally, her mother's dangerous illness, Emmeline's health appeared so shattered, that as soon as the actual danger was passed, Myrvin insisted on her going with him, for change of air and scene, to Llangwillan, a proposal that both her father and Mr. Maitland seconded; trembling for the precious girl so lately made his own, Arthur resisted her entreaties to remain a little longer at Oakwood, and conveyed her at once to his father's vicarage, where time and improved tidings of her mother, restored at length the bloom to her cheek and the smile to her lip.

It was strange to observe the difference of character which opposite circumstances and opposite treatment in their infant years had made in these two cousins. Emmeline and Ellen, had they been brought up from babes together, and the same discipline extended to each, would, in all probability, have in after years displayed precisely the same disposition; but though weak indulgence had never been extended to Emmeline, prosperity unalloyed, save in the affair with Arthur Myrvin, had been her portion. Affection and caresses had been ever lavished almost unconsciously upon her, but instead of cherishing faults, such treatment had formed her happiness, and had encouraged and led her on in the paths of virtue

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Every thought and feeling were expressed without disguise she had been so accustomed to think aloud to her mother from childhood, so accustomed to give vent to her little vexations in words, her sorrows in tears, which were quickly dried, that as years increased, she found it a very difficult task either to restrain her sentiments or control her feelings. Her mind could not be called weak, for in her affection for Arthur Myrvin, as we have seen, when there was a peremptory call for exertion or self-control, it was ever heard and attended to Her health indeed suffered, but that very fact proved the mind was stronger than the frame; though when she marked Ellen's superior composure and coolness, Emmeline would sometimes bitterly reproach herself. From her birth, Ellen had been initiated in sorrow, her infant years had been one scene of trial. Never caressed by her mother or those around her, save when her poor father was near, she had learned to bury every affectionate yearning deep within her own little heart, every childish sentiment was carefully concealed, and her father's death, the horrors of that night, appeared to have placed the seal on her character, infant as she was. She was scarcely ten when she became an inmate of her aunt's family, but then it was too late for her character to become as Emmeline's. The impression had been made on the yielding wax, and now it could not be effaced. Many circumstances contributed to strengthen this impression, as in the first portion of this history we have seen. Adversity had made Ellen as she was, and self-control had become her second nature, long before she knew the meaning of the word.

The intelligence of Herbert's death, though deferred till St. Eval thought his wife enabled to bear it with some composure, had, however, so completely thrown her back, that she was quite unequal to travel to England, as her wishes had instantly dictated, and her husband was compelled to keep up a constant system of deception with regard to her mother's illness, lest she should insist, weak as she was, on immediately flying to her aid. As soon as sufficient strength returned for Mrs. Hamilton to express her wishes, she entreated Percy to rejoin his sister, that all alarm on her account might subside. The thought of her child was still uppermost in the mother's mind, though her excessive debility compelled her to lie motionless for hours on her couch, scarcely sensible of any thing passing around her, or that her husband and Ellen hardly for one moment left her side. The plan succeeded. Caroline

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recovered soon after Percy's arrival; and at the earnest message Percy bore her from her mother, that she would not think of returning to England till her health was quite restored, she consented leisurely to take the celebrated excursion down the Rhine, ere she returned home.

It would have seemed as though no other grief could be the portion of Ellen, but another sorrow was impending over her, which, while it lasted, was a source of distress inferior only to Herbert's death. Entering the library one morning, she was rather surprised to find not only Mr. Maitland but Archdeacon Howard with her uncle.

The former was now too constantly a visitor at the Hall to occasion individually much surprise, but it was the expression on the countenances of each that created alarm. Mr. Hamilton appeared struggling with some strong and painful emotion, and had started as Ellen entered the room, while he looked imploringly towards the Archdeacon, as if seeking his counsel and assistance.

"Can we indeed trust her?" Mr. Maitland said, doubtingly, and in a low voice, as he looked sadly upon Ellen. "Can we be sure these melancholy tidings will be for the present inviolably kept from Mrs. Hamilton, for suspense such as this, in her present state of health, might produce consequences on which I tremble to think?"

"You may depend upon me, Mr. Maitland," Ellen said, firmly, as she came forward. "What new affliction can have happened of which you so dread my aunt being informed? Oh, do not deceive me. I have heard enough to make fancy perhaps more dreadful than reality, Mr. Howard. My dear uncle, will you not trust me?"

"My poor Ellen," her uncle said, in a faltering voice, "you have indeed borne sorrow well; but this will demand even a greater share of fortitude. All is not yet known, there may be hope, but I dare not encourage it. Tell her, Howard," he added, hastily shrinking from her sorrowful glance, "I cannot."

"Is it of Edward you would tell me? Oh, what of him?" she exclaimed. "Oh, tell me at once, Mr. Howard, indeed, indeed, I can bear it."

With the tenderness of a father, Mr. Howard gently and soothingly told her that letters had that morning arrived from Edward's captain, informing them that the young lieutenant had been despatched with a boat's crew, on a message to a ship

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stationed about twelve miles southward, towards the Cape of Good Hope; a storm had arisen as the night darkened, but still Captain Seaforth had felt no uneasiness, imagining his young officer had deemed it better remaining on board the Stranger all night, though somewhat contrary to his usual habits of promptness and activity. As the day, however, waned to noon, and still Lieutenant Fortescue did not appear, the captain dispatched another boat to know why he tarried. The sea was still raging in fury from the last night's storm, but the foaming billows had never before detained Edward from his duty. With increasing anxiety, Captain Seaforth paced the deck for several hours, until indeed the last boat he had sent returned. He scanned the crew with an eye that never failed him, and saw with dismay, that neither his lieutenant nor one of his men were amongst them. Horror-stricken and distressed, the sailors related, that despite every persuasion of the captain of the Stranger, Lieutenant Fortescue had resolved on returning to the Gem the moment his message had been delivered and the answer given; his men had seconded him, though many signs denoted that as the evening advanced, so too would the impending storm. Twilight was darkening around him when, urged on by a mistaken sense of duty, the intrepid young man descended into the boat, and not half an hour afterwards the storm came on with terrific violence, and the pitchy darkness had entirely frustrated every effort of the crew of the Stranger to trace the boat. Morning dawned, and brought with it some faint confirmation of the fate which all had dreaded. Some spars on which the name of the Gem was impressed, and which were easily recognized as belonging to the long-boat, floating on the foaming waves, and the men sent out to reconnoitre had discovered the dead body of one of the unfortunate sailors, who the evening previous had been so full of life and mirth, clinging to some sea-weed; while a hat, bearing the name of Edward Fortescue, caused the painful suspicion that the young and gallant officer had shared the same fate. Every inquiry was set afloat, every exertion made, to discover something more certain concerning him, but without any effect. Some faint hope there yet existed, that he might have been picked up by one of the ships which were continually passing and repassing on that course; and Captain Seaforth concluded his melancholy narration by entreating Mr. Hamilton not to permit himself to despair, as hope there yet was, though but faint. Evidently he wrote as he felt, not

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merely to calm the minds of Edward's sorrowing friends, but Mr. Hamilton could not share these sanguine expectations. Mystery had also enveloped the fate of his brother-in-law, Charles Manvers; long, very long, had he hoped that he lived, that he would yet return; but year after year had passed, till four-and-twenty had rolled by, and still there were no tidings. Well did he remember the heart-sickening that had attended his hopes deferred, the anguish of suspense which for many weary months had been the portion of his wife, and he thought it almost better for Ellen to believe her brother dead, than to live on in the indulgence of hopes that might have no foundation; yet how could he tell her he was dead, when there was one gleam of hope, however faint. Well did he know the devoted affection which the orphans bore to each other. He gazed on her in deep commiseration, as in unbroken silence she listened to the tenderly-told tale; and, drawing her once more to his bosom as Mr. Howard ceased, he fondly and repeatedly kissed her brow, as he entreated her not to despair; Edward might yet be saved. No word came from Ellen's parched lips, but he felt the cold shudder of suffering pass through her frame. Several minutes passed, and still she raised not her head. Impressively the venerable clergyman addressed her, in tones and words that never failed to find their way to the orphan's heart. He spoke of a love and mercy that sent these continued trials to mark her as more peculiarly His own. He told of comfort, that even in such a moment she could feel. He bade her cease not to pray for her brother's safety; that nothing was too great for the power of the mercy of the Lord; that however it might appear impossible to worldly minds that he could be saved, yet if the Almighty's hand had been stretched forth, a hundred storms might have passed him by unhurt; yet he bade her not entertain too sanguine hopes. "Place our beloved Edward and yourself in the hands of our Father in heaven, my child; implore Him for strength to meet His will, whatever it may be, and if, indeed, He hath taken him in mercy to a happier world, He will give you strength and grace to meet His ordinance of love; but if hope still lingers, check it not—he may be spared. Be comforted, then, my child, and for the sake of the beloved relative yet spared you, try and compose your agitated spirits. We may trust to your care in retaining this fresh grief from her, I know we may."

"You are right, Mr. Howard; oh, may God bless you for your kindness!" said the almost heart-broken girl, as she

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raised her head and placed her trembling hands in his. Her cheeks were colorless as marble, but the long dark fringes that rested on them were unwetted by tears; she had forcibly sent them back. Her heart throbbed almost to suffocation, but she would not listen to its anguish. The form of Herbert seemed to flit before her and remind her of her promise, that her every care, her every energy should be devoted to his mother; and that remembrance, strengthened as it was by Mr. Howard's words, nerved her to the painful duty which was now hers to perform. "You may indeed trust me. My Father in heaven will support me, and give me strength to conceal this intelligence effectually, till my beloved aunt is enabled to hear it with composure. Do not fear me, Mr. Maitland; it is not in my own strength I trust, for that I feel too painfully at this moment is less than nothing. My dearest uncle, will you not trust your Ellen?"

She turned towards him as she spoke, and Mr. Hamilton felt the tears glisten in his eyes as he met the upturned glance of the afflicted orphan—now indeed, as it seemed, so utterly alone.

"Yes, I do and ever will trust you, my beloved Ellen," he said, with emotion. "May God grant you His blessing in this most painful duty. To Him I commend you, my child; I would speak of comfort and hope, but He alone can give them.'

"And He *will*," replied Ellen, in a slow, steady voice; and, gently withdrawing her hand from Mr. Howard's, she softly but quickly left the library. But half an hour elapsed, and Ellen was once more seated by her aunt's couch. The struggle of that half hour we will not follow; it was too sacred, too painful to be divulged, and many, many solitary hours were thus spent in suffering, known only to herself and to her God.

"You have been long away from me, my Ellen, or else my selfish wish to have you again near me has made me think so," Mrs. Hamilton said, that eventful morning.

"Have you then missed me, my dear aunt? I am glad of it, for comfort as it is to be allowed to remain always with you, it is even greater pleasure to think you like to have me near you," replied Ellen.

"Can I do otherwise, my own Ellen? Where can I find a nurse so tender, affectionate, and attentive as you are? Who would know so well how to cheer and soothe me as the child whose smallest action proves how much she loves me?"

Tears glistened in the eyes of Ellen as her aunt spoke, for

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if she had wanted fresh incentive for exertion, those simple words would have given it. Oh, how much encouragement may be given in one sentence from those we love; how is every effort to please lightened by the consciousness it is appreciated; how is every duty sweetened when we feel we are beloved.

Mrs. Hamilton knew not how that expression of her feelings had fallen on the torn heart of her niece; she guessed not one half Ellen endured in secret for her sake, but she felt, and showed she felt, the full value of the unremitting affectionate attentions she received.

Days, weeks passed by; at length, Mrs. Hamilton's extreme debility began to give place to the more restless weariness of convalescence. It was comparatively an easy task to sit in continued silence by the couch, actively yet quietly to anticipate her faintest wish, and attend to all the duties of nurse, which demanded no exertion in the way of talking, and other efforts at amusement; there were then very many hours that Ellen's saddened thoughts could dwell on the painful past.

She struggled to behold heaven's mercy in affliction, and rapidly, more rapidly than she was herself aware of, was this young and gentle girl progressing in the paths of grace. Had Herbert and Mary both lived and been united, Ellen would, in all probability, have at length so conquered her feelings, as to have been happy in the marriage state; and though she could not have bestowed the first freshness of young affection, she would ever have so felt and acted as to be, in very truth, as Lord St. Eval had said, a treasure to any man who had the felicity to call her his. Had her cousin indeed married, Ellen might have felt it incumbent on her as an actual duty so to conquer herself; but now that he was dead, she felt it no sin to love, in devoting herself to his parents in their advancing age, partly for his sake, in associating him with all she did for them, and for all whom he loved; there was no sin now in all this, but she felt it would be a crime to give her hand to another, when her whole heart was thus devoted to the dead. There was something peculiarly soothing to the grateful and affectionate feelings with which she regarded her aunt and uncle, that she perhaps would be the only one of all those who had

"Played
Beneath the same green tree,
Whose voices mingled as they prayed
Around one parent knee."

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who would remain with nothing to divert her attention from the pleasing task of soothing and cheering their advancing years, and her every effort was now turned towards making her *single* life indeed one of *blessedness*, by works of good and thoughts of love towards all with whom she might associate; but in these visions her brother had ever intimately mingled. She had pictured herself beholding and rejoicing in his happiness, loving his children as her own, being to them a second mother. She had fancied herself ever received with joy, a welcome inmate of her Edward's home; and so strongly had her imagination become impressed with this idea, that its annihilation appeared to heighten the anguish with which the news of his untimely fate had overwhelmed her. He was gone; and it seemed as if she had never, never felt so utterly destitute before; as if advancing years had entirely lost the soft and gentle coloring with which they had so lately been invested. It seemed but a very short interval since she had seen him, the lovely, playful child, his mother's pet, the admiration of all who looked on him; then he stood before her, the handsome, manly boy she had parted with, when he first left the sheltering roof of Oakwood, to become a sailor. Then, shuddering, she recalled him when they had met again, after a lapse of suffering in the young life of each; and her too sensitive fancy conjured up the thought that her fault had not yet been sufficiently chastised, that he was taken from her because she had loved him too well; because her deep, intense affection for him had caused her once to forget the mandate of her God. In the deep agony of that thought, it seemed as if she lived over again those months of suffering, which in a former page we have endeavored to describe.

Humbled to the dust, she recognized the chastising hand of her Maker; and as if it had only now been committed, she acknowledged and repented the transgression a moment's powerful temptation had forced her to commit. Had there been one to whom she could have confessed these feelings, whose soothing friendship would have whispered it was needless and uncalled-for to enhance the suffering of Edward's fate by such self-reproach, Ellen's young heart would have been relieved; but from that beloved relative who might have consoled and alleviated her grief, this bitter trial she must still conceal. Mr. Hamilton dared not encourage the hope which he had never felt, but his bosom swelled with love and almost veneration for the gentle being, to whose care Mr. Maitland had assured him

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the recovery of his beloved wife was, under Providence, greatly owing. He longed to speak of comfort; but, alas! what could he say? he would have praised, encouraged, but there was that about his niece that utterly forbade it; for it silently yet impressively told whence that sustaining strength arose.

It was when Mrs. Hamilton was beginning to recover, that still more active exertions on the part of Ellen were demanded. Every effort was now made to prevent her relapsing into that despondency which convalescence so often engenders, however we may strive to resist it. She was ready at a minute's notice to comply with and often to anticipate her aunt's most faintly hinted wishes; she would read to her, sing her favorite airs, or by a thousand little winning arts unconsciously to entice the interest of her aunt to her various pursuits, as had been her wont in former days. There was no appearance of effort on her part, and Mrs. Hamilton insensibly, at first, but surely felt that with her strength her habitual cheerfulness was returning, and fervently she blessed her God for this abundant mercy. No exertion on her side was wanting to become to her husband and household as she had been before the death of her beloved son; she felt the beauteous flower was transplanted above; the hand of the reaper had laid it low, though the eye of faith beheld it in perfect undying loveliness; and though the mother's heart yet sorrowed, 'twas a sorrow now in which no pain was mingled.

One evening they had been speaking, among other subjects, of Lilla Grahame, whose letters, Mrs. Hamilton had observed, were not written in her usual style. Too well did Ellen guess the reason; once only the poor girl had alluded to Edward's supposed fate, but that once had more than sufficiently betrayed to Ellen's quickly-excited sympathy the true nature of her feelings towards him. As Lilla had not, however, written in perfect confidence, but still as if she feared to write too much on emotions she scarcely understood herself, Ellen had not answered her as she would otherwise have done. That her sympathy was Lilla's was very clearly evident but as the secrecy preserved towards Mrs. Hamilton had been made known to her by Emmeline, she had not written again on the subject, but yet Ellen was not deceived; in every letter she received she could easily penetrate where Lilla's anxious thoughts were wandering. Of Cecil Grahame there were still no tidings, and, all circumstances considered, it did not seem strange she should often be sorrowful and anxious. On dis-

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missing this subject, Mrs. Hamilton had asked Ellen to sing to her, and selected, as a very old favorite, "The Graves of the Household." She had always forgotten it, she said, before, when Ellen wished her to select one she preferred. She was surprised that Ellen had not reminded her of it, as it had once been an equal favorite with her. For a moment Ellen hesitated, and then hastened to the piano. In a low, sweet, yet unfaltering voice, she complied with her aunt's request; once only her lip quivered, for she could not sing that verse without the thought of Edward.

"The sea, the blue lone sea, hath one,
He lies where pearls lie deep;
He was the loved of all, yet none
O'er his low bed may weep."

Mr. Hamilton unobserved had entered the room, and now stood with folded arms and mournful glance, alternately regarding his wife and niece. Mr. Maitland had that morning told him there was not now the slightest danger remaining, and he rather advised that Mrs. Hamilton should be informed of what had passed, lest the painful intelligence should come upon her when quite unprepared. He had striven for composure, and he now entered expressly to execute this painful task; he had marked the suffering imprinted on his niece's face, and he could continue the deception no longer. On the conclusion of her song, Ellen reseated herself on the stool she had occupied at her aunt's feet, her heart too full to speak.

"Why are you so silent, my dear husband?" Mrs. Hamilton said, addressing him, and he almost started at her address. "May I know the subject of such very deep thought?"

"Ellen, partly," he replied, and he spoke the truth. "I was thinking how pale and thin she looks, and how much she has lately had to distress and cause her anxiety."

"She has, indeed, and therefore the sooner we can leave Oakwood for a few months, as we intended, the better. I have been a long and troublesome patient, my Ellen, and all your efforts to restore me to perfect health will be quite ineffectual unless I see the color return to your cheek, and your step resume its elasticity."

"Do not fear for me, my beloved aunt; indeed I am quite well," answered Ellen, not daring to look up, lest her tears should be discovered.

"You are right, my Emmeline," suddenly exclaimed Mr

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Hamilton, rousing himself with a strong effort, and advancing to the couch where his wife sat, he threw his arms around her. "You do not yet know all that our Ellen has in secret borne for your sake. You do not yet know the deep affliction which is the real cause of that alteration in her health, which only now you are beginning to discover. Oh, my beloved wife, I have feared to tell you, but now that strength is returning, I may hesitate no longer; for her sake you will bear these cruel tidings even as she has done. Will you not comfort her? Will you—" The sudden opening of the door arrested the words upon his lips. Touched by indefinable alarm, Mrs. Hamilton's hand grasped his without the power of speech. Ellen had risen, for she felt she could not hear those sad words again spoken.

It was James the footman who entered, and he placed a letter in her hand. She looked at the direction, a faint cry broke from her lips; she tore it open, gazed on the signature, and sunk senseless on the floor. She who had borne suffering so well, who had successfully struggled to conceal every trace of emotion, when affliction was her allotted portion, was now too weak to bear the sudden transition from such bitter grief to overwhelming joy. Mr. Hamilton sprang forward; he could not arrest her fall, but his eye had caught the well-known writing of him he had believed lay buried in the ocean; and conquering her own extreme agitation, Mrs. Hamilton compelled herself to think of nothing but restoring the still senseless girl to life. A few, very few words told her all. At first Mr. Hamilton's words had been almost inarticulate from the thankfulness that filled his heart. It was long ere Ellen awoke to consciousness. Her slight frame was utterly exhausted by its continued conflict with the mind within, and now that joy had come, that there was no more need for control or sorrow, her extraordinary energy of character for the moment fled, and left her in very truth the weak and loving woman. Before she could restore life to Ellen's inanimate form, Mrs. Hamilton had time to hear that simple tale of silent suffering, to feel her bosom glow in increasing love and gratitude towards the gentle being who for her sake had endured as much.

"Was it but a dream, or did I not read that Edward lived, was spared,—that he was not drowned? Oh, tell me! my brain seems still to swim. Did they not give me a letter signed by him himself? Oh, was it only fancy?"

"It is truth, my beloved Ellen; the Almighty mercifully

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stretched forth His arm and saved him. Should we not give him thanks, my child?"

Like dew upon the arid desert, or healing balm to a throbbing wound, so did those few and simple words fall on Ellen's ear; but the fervent thanksgiving that rose swelling in her heart, wanted not words to render it acceptable to Him, whose unbounded mercy she thus acknowledged and adored.

Mrs. Hamilton pressed her closer to her bosom, again and again she kissed her, and tried to speak the words of affectionate soothing, which seldom failed to restore Ellen to composure.

"You told me once, my Ellen, that you never, never could repay the large debt of gratitude you seemed to think you owed me. Do you remember my saying you could not tell that one day you might make me your debtor, and are not my words truth? Did I not prophesy rightly? What do I not owe you, my own love, for sparing me so much anxiety and wretchedness? Look up and smile, my Ellen, and let us try if we can listen composedly to our dear Edward's account of his providential escape. If he were near me I would scold him for giving you such inexpressible joy so suddenly."

Ellen did look up and did smile a bright beaming smile of chastened happiness, and again and again did she read over that letter, as if it were tidings too blessed to be believed, as if it could not be Edward himself who had written. His letter was hasty, nor did he enter into very many particulars, which, to render a particular part of our tale intelligible, we must relate at large in another chapter. This epistle was dated from Rio Janeiro, and written evidently under the idea that his sister had received a former letter containing every minutiæ of his escape, which he had forwarded to her, under cover to Captain Seaforth, only seven days after his supposed death. Had the captain received this letter, all anxiety would have been spared, for as he did not write to Mr. Hamilton for above a week after Edward's disappearance, it would have reached him first; it was therefore very clear it had been lost on its way, and Edward fearing such might be the case, from the uncertain method by which it had been sent, wrote again. He had quite recovered, he said, all ill effects from being so long floating in the water on a narrow plank; that he was treated with marked kindness and attention by all the crew of the Alma, a Spanish vessel bound to Rio Janeiro and thence to New York, particularly by an Englishman, Lieutenant Mordaunt, to whose ener-

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getic exertions he said he greatly owed his preservation; for it was he who had prevailed on the captain to lower a boat, to discover what that strange object was floating on the waves. He continued, there was something about Lieutenant Mordaunt he could not define, but which had the power of irresistibly attracting his respect, if not affection. His story he believed was uncommon, but he had not yet heard it all, and had no time to repeat it, as he was writing in great haste. Affectionately he hoped no alarm amongst his friends had been entertained on his account, that it would not be long before he returned home; for as soon as the slow-sailing Spaniard could finish her affairs with the ports along the coast of Spanish America, and reach New-York, Lieutenant Mordaunt and himself had determined on quitting her, and returning to England by the first packet that sailed. A letter to New York might reach him, but it was a chance; therefore he did not expect to receive any certain intelligence of home—a truth which only made him the more anxious to reach it.

Quickly the news that Edward Fortescue lived, and was returning home in perfect health, extended far and wide, and brought joy to all who heard it. A messenger was instantly dispatched to Trevilion Vicarage to impart the joyful intelligence to Arthur and Emmeline, and the next day saw them both at Oakwood to rejoice with Ellen at this unexpected but most welcome news. There was not one who had been aware of the suspense Mr. Hamilton and Ellen had been enduring who did not sympathize in their relief. Even Mrs. Greville left her solitary home to seek the friends of her youth; she had done so previously when affliction was their portion. She had more than once shared Ellen's anxious task of nursing, when Mrs. Hamilton's fever had been highest; kindly and judiciously she had soothed in grief, and Mrs. Greville's character was too unselfish to refuse her sympathy in joy.

A few weeks after the receipt of that letter, Mr. Hamilton, his wife, and Ellen, removed to a beautiful little villa in the neighborhood of Richmond, where they intended to pass some of the winter months. A change was desirable; indeed requisite for all. But a short interval had passed since the death of their beloved Herbert, and there were many times when the parents' hearts yet painfully bled, and each felt retirement, the society of each other, and sometimes of their most valued friends, the exercise of domestic and religious duties, would be the most efficient means of acquiring that peace of which even

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the greatest affliction cannot deprive the truly religious mind. At Christmas, St. Eval had promised his family should join them, and all looked forward to that period with pleasure.

CHAPTER XXI.

ALTHOUGH we are as much averse to retrospection in a tale as our readers can be, yet to retrace our steps for a short interval is a necessity. Edward had written highly of Lieutenant Mordaunt, but as he happens to be a personage of rather more consequence to him than young Fortescue imagined, we must be allowed to introduce him more intimately to our readers.

It was the evening after that in which Lieutenant Fortescue had so rashly encountered the storm, that a Spanish vessel of ill-shaped bulk and of some hundred tons, was slowly pursuing her course from the coast of Guinea towards Rio Janeiro. The sea was calm, almost motionless, compared with its previous fearful agitation. The sailors were gayly employed in their various avocations, declaring loudly that this respite of calm was entirely owing to the interposition of St. Jago in their favor, he being the saint to whom they had last appealed during the continuance of the tempest. Aloof from the crew, and leaning against a mast, stood one apparently very different to those by whom he was surrounded. It was an English countenance, but embrowned almost to a swarthy hue, from continued exposure to a tropical sun. Tall and remarkably well formed, he might well have been supposed of noble birth; there were, however, traces of long-continued suffering imprinted on his manly face and in his form, which sometimes was slightly bent, as if from weakness rather than from age. His dark brown hair was in many parts silvered with gray, which made him appear as if he had seen some fifty years at least; though at times, by the expression of his countenance, he might have been thought full ten years younger. Melancholy was the characteristic of his features; but his eye would kindle and the cheek flush, betraying that a high, warm spirit still lurked within, one which a keen observer might have fancied had been suppressed by injury and suffering. It was in truth a countenance on which a physiognomist or painter would have loved to dwell, for both would have found in it an interest they could scarcely have defined.

Thus resting in meditative silence, Lieutenant Mordaunt's

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attention was attracted by a strange object floating on the now calm ocean. There were no ships near, and Mordaunt felt his eyes fascinated in that direction, and looking still more attentively, he felt convinced it was a human body secured to a plank. He sought the captain instantly, and used every persuasion humanity could dictate to urge him to lower a boat For some time he entreated in vain. Captain Bartholomew said it was mere folly to think there was any chance of saving a man's life, who had been so long tossed about on the water, it would be only detaining him for nothing; his ship was already too full either for comfort or profit, and he would not do it.

Fire flashed from the dark eyes of Mordaunt at the captain's positive and careless language, and he spoke again with all the spirited eloquence of a British sailor. He did not spare the cruel recklessness that could thus refuse to save a fellow-creature's life, merely because it might occasion a little delay and trouble. Captain Bartholomew looked at him in astonishment; he little expected such a burst of indignant feeling from one whose melancholy and love of solitude he had despised; and, without answering a word, led the way to the deck, looked in the direction of the plank, which had now floated near enough to the ship for the body of Edward to be clearly visible upon it, and then instantly commanded a boat to be lowered and bring it on board.

"It will be but taking him out of the sea to plunge him back again, Senor," he said, in Spanish, to the Lieutenant, who was now anxiously watching the proceedings of the sailors, who, more active than their captain, had carefully laid the plank and its burden at the bottom of the boat, and were now rapidly rowing to the ship. "Never was death more clearly imprinted on a man's countenance than it is there, but have your own will; only do not ask me to keep a dead man on board, I should have my men mutiny in a twinkling."

Mordaunt made him no answer, but hastened towards the gangway, where the men were now ascending. They carefully unloosed the bonds that attached the body to the plank, and laid him on a pile of cushions where the light of the setting sun shone full on his face and form. One glance sufficed for Mordaunt to perceive he was an English officer; another caused him to start some paces back in astonishment. As the youth thus lay, the deadly paleness of his countenance, the extreme fairness of his throat and part of his neck, which, as the sailors

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hastily untied his neckcloth and opened his jacket, were fully exposed to view, the beautifully formed brow strewed by thick masses of golden curls gave him so much the appearance of a delicate female, that the sailors looked humorously at each other, as if wondering what right he had to a sailor's jacket; but Mordaunt's eyes never moved from him. Thoughts came crowding over him, so full of youth, of home and joy, that tears gushed to his eyes, tears which had not glistened there for many a long year; and yet he knew not wherefore, he knew not, he could not, had he been asked, have defined the cause of that strong emotion; but the more he looked upon that beautiful face, the faster and thicker came those visions on his soul. Memories came rushing back, days of his fresh and happy boyhood, affections, long slumbering, recalled in all their purity, and his bosom yearned towards home, as if no time had elapsed since last he had beheld it, as if he should find all those he loved even as he had left them. And what had brought them back? who was the youth on whom he gazed, and towards whom he felt affection strangely and suddenly aroused, affection so powerful, he could not shake it off? Nothing in all probability to him; and vainly he sought to account for the emotions those bright features awakened within him. Rousing himself, as symptoms of life began to appear in the exhausted form before him, he desired that the youth might be carried to his own cabin. He was his countryman, he said; an officer of equal rank it appeared, from his epaulette, and he should not feel comfortable were he under the care of any other. On bearing him from the deck to the cabin, a small volume fell from his loosened vest, which Mordaunt raised from the ground with some curiosity, to know what could be so precious to a youthful sailor. It was a pocket Bible, so much resembling one Mordaunt possessed himself, that, scarcely knowing what he was about, he drew it from his pocket to compare them. "How can I be so silly?" he thought; "is there any thing strange in two English Bibles resembling each other?" He replaced his own, opened the other, and started in increased amazement. "Charles Manvers!" he cried, as that name met his eye. "Merciful heaven! who is this youth? to whom would this Bible ever have been given?" So great was his agitation, that it was with difficulty he read the words which were written beneath.

"Edward Fortescue! oh, when will that name rival his to whom this book once belonged? I may be as brave a sailor,

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but what will make me as good a man. This Sacred Book, he loved it, and so will I." Underneath, and evidently added at a later period, was the following:

"I began to read this for the sake of those beloved ones to whom I knew it was all in all. I thought, for its own sake, it would never have become the dear and sacred volume they regarded it, but I am mistaken; how often has it soothed me in my hour of temptation, guided me in my duties, restrained my angry moments, and brought me penitent and humble to the footstool of my God? Oh, my beloved Ellen, had this been my companion three years ago as it is now, what misery I should have spared you."

Other memorandums in the same style were written in the blank leaves which appeared attached for the purpose, but it so happened that not one of them solved the mystery which so completely puzzled Mordaunt. The name of Fortescue was utterly unknown to him, and increased the mystery of the youth's having produced such a strange effect upon his mind. There were many names introduced in these memorandums, but they explained nothing; one only struck him, it was one which in his hours of suffering, of slavery, ever sounded in his ear, the fondly-remembered name of her whom he longed to clasp to his aching heart—it was *Emmeline;* and as he read it, the same gush of memory came over him as when he first gazed on Edward. In vain reason whispered there were many, very many Emmelines in his native land; that name only brought one to his remembrance. Though recovering, the youth was still much too weak and exhausted to attempt speaking, and Mordaunt watched by his couch for one day and two nights, ere the surgeon permitted him to ask a question or Edward to answer it. Often, however, during that interval, had the young stranger turned his bright blue eyes with a look of intelligence and feeling on him who attended him with the care of a father, and the color, the expression of those eyes seemed to thrill to Mordaunt's heart, and speak even yet more forcibly of days gone by.

"Let me write but two lines, to tell Captain Seaforth I am safe and well," said Edward impetuously, as he sprung with renewed spirits from the couch on which he had been so long an unwilling prisoner.

"And how send it, my young friend? There is not a vessel within sight on the wide sea."

Edward uttered an exclamation of impatience, then instantly checking himself, said, with a smile—

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"Forgive me, sir; I should think only of my merciful preservation, and of endeavoring to express in some manner my obligations to you, to whose generous exertions, blessed as they were by heaven, I owe my life. Oh, would that my aunt and sister were near me, their gratitude for the preservation of one whom they perhaps too fondly and too partially love, would indeed be gratifying to feelings such as yours. I can feel what I owe you, Lieutenant Mordaunt, but I cannot express myself sufficiently in words."

"In the name of heaven, young man, in pity tell me who you are!" gasped Mordaunt, almost inarticulately, as he grasped Edward's hand and gazed intently on his face; for every word he spoke, heightened by the kindling animation of his features, appeared to render that extraordinary likeness yet more perfect.

"Edward Fortescue is my name."

"But your mother's, boy,—your mother's? I ask not from idle curiosity."

"She was the youngest daughter of Lord Delmont, Eleanor Manvers."

Mordaunt gazed yet more intently on the youth, then hoarsely murmuring, "I knew it,—it was no fancy," sunk back almost overpowered with momentary agitation. Recovering himself almost instantly, and before Edward could give vent to his surprise and sympathy in words, he asked, "Is Lord Delmont yet alive? I knew him once; he was a kind old man." His lip quivered, so as almost to prevent the articulation of his words.

"Oh, no; the departure of my mother for India was a trial he never recovered, and the intelligence that his only son, a noble and gallant officer, perished with the crew of the Leander, finally broke his heart; he never held up his head again, and died a very few months afterwards."

Mordaunt buried his face in his hands, and for several minutes remained silent, as if struggling with some powerful emotion, then asked, "You spoke only of your aunt and sister. Does not your mother live?"

"She died when I was little more than eleven years old, and my sister scarcely ten. My father, Colonel Fortescue, dying in India, she could not bear to remain there, but we were compelled to take refuge off the coast of Wales from the storms which had arisen, and then she had only time to give us to the care of her sister, for whom she had sent, and died in her arms."

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"And is it her sister, or your father's, of whom you spoke just now?"

"Hers—Mrs. Hamilton."

"Hamilton, and she lives still! you said you knew her," repeated Mordaunt, suddenly springing up and speaking in a tone of animation that bewildered Edward almost as much as his former agitation. "Speak of her, young man; tell me something of her. Oh, it is long since I have heard her name."

"Did you know my aunt? I have never heard her mention your name, Lieutenant Mordaunt."

"Very likely not," he replied, and a faint smile played round his lip, creating an expression which made young Fortescue start, for the features seemed familiar to him. "It was only in my boyhood that I knew her, and she was kind to me. We do not easily forget the associations of our boyhood, my young friend, particularly when manhood has been a dreary blank, or tinged with pain. In my hours of slavery, the smile and look of Emmeline Manvers has often haunted my waking and my sleeping dreams; but she is married—is in all probability a happy wife and loving mother; prosperity is around her, and it is most likely she has forgotten the boy to whom her kindness was so dear."

"Hours of slavery?" asked Edward, for those words had alone riveted his attention. "Can you, a free and British sailor, have ever been a slave?"

"Even so, my young friend; for seven years I languished in the loathsome dungeons of Algiers, and the last sixteen years have been a slave."

Edward grasped his hand with an uncontrollable impulse, while at the same moment he clenched his sword, and his countenance expressed the powerful indignation of his young and gallant spirit, though words for the moment he had none. Lieutenant Mordaunt again smiled—that smile, which by some indefinable power inspired Edward with affection and esteem.

"I am free now, my gallant boy," he said; "free as if the galling fetters of slavery had never bowed down my neck. Another day you shall hear more. Now gratify me by some account of your aunt; speak of her—tell me if she have children—if her husband still lives. If Mrs. Hamilton is still the same gentle affectionate being—the same firm, unflinching character, when duty called her, as the Emmeline Manvers it was once my joy to know."

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With an animation which again riveted the eyes of Lieutenant Mordaunt on his countenance, Edward eagerly entered on the subject. No other could have been dearer to him; Mordaunt could have fixed on few which would thus have called forth the eloquence of his young companion. Sailor as he was, truly enthusiastic in his profession, yet home to Edward still possessed invincible attractions, and the devoted affection, gratitude, and reverence he felt for his aunt appeared to increase with his years. Neither Percy nor Herbert could have loved her more. He spoke as he felt; he told of all he owed her, and not only himself but his orphan sister; he said that as a mother she had been to them both, that never once had she made the slightest difference between them and her own children. He painted in vivid colors the domestic joys of Oakwood, the affectionate harmony that reigned there, till Mordaunt felt his eyes glisten with emotion, and ere that conversation ceased, all that affection which for many a long and weary year had pined for some one on which to expend its force, now centred in the noble youth of whose preservation he had been so strangely and providentially an instrument. To Edward it was not in the least strange, that any one who had once known his aunt, it mattered not how many years previous, should still retain a lively remembrance of her, and wish to know more concerning her, and his feelings were strongly excited towards one whose interest in all that concerned her was evidently so great. His first letter to his family, which he endorsed in one to his captain, spoke very much of Lieutenant Mordaunt, wondering that his aunt had never mentioned one who remembered her so well. This letter, as we know, was never received, and the next he wrote was too hurried to enter into particulars, except those that related to himself alone. When he again wrote home, he had become so attached and so used to Mordaunt, that he fancied he must be as well known to his family as himself; and though he mentioned his name repeatedly, he did not think of inquiring any thing concerning him.

The able activity as a sailor, the graceful, courteous manner of Edward as a man, soon won him the hearts of Captain Bartholomew and all his crew. Ever the first when there was any thing to be done on board or on shore, lively, high-spirited, and condescending, his appearance on deck after any absence was generally acknowledged with respect. The various characters thus presented to his notice in the Spanish crew, the many

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ports he touched at, afforded him continual and exciting amuse ment, although his thoughts very often lingered on his darling "Gem," with the ardent desire to be once more doing his duty on her decks. But amid all these changing scenes, Edward and his friend, diverse as were their ages and apparently their dispositions, became almost inseparable. An irresistible impulse urged Edward repeatedly to talk to him of his home, till Mordaunt became intimately acquainted with every member of the family. Of Herbert, Edward would speak with enthusiasm; he little knew, poor fellow, that the cousin whose character he almost venerated was gone to his last home, that he should never see him more. Letters detailing that melancholy event had been forwarded to the Gem, arriving there just one week after the young sailor's disappearance; and, when informed of his safety, Captain Seaforth, then on his way to England, had no opportunity of forwarding them to him. His repeated mention of Herbert in his letters home, his anxious desire to hear something of him, were most painful to his family, and Ellen was more than ever anxious he should receive the account ere he returned.

Among other subjects discussed between them, Mordaunt once asked Edward who now bore the title of Lord Delmont, and had appeared somewhat agitated when told the title was now extinct, and had become so from the melancholy death of the promising young nobleman on whom it had devolved.

"Sir George Wilmot is out in his prognostication then," he observed, after a pause. "I remember, when a youngster under his command, hearing him repeatedly prophesy that a Delmont would revive the honor of his ancient house by naval fame. Poor Charles was ever his favorite amongst us."

"You were my uncle's messmate then," said Edward, in a tone of surprise and joy. "Why did you not tell me this before, that I might ask all the questions I long to know concerning him?"

"And what have you heard of Charles to call for this extreme interest?" replied Mordaunt, with his peculiar smile. "I should have thought that long ere this my poor friend had been forgotten in his native land."

"Forgotten! and by a sister who doated on him; who has never ceased to lament his melancholy fate; who ever held him up to my young fancy as one of those whom it should be my glory to resemble. Did you know my aunt, as by two or three things I have heard you say, I fancy you must, you could never

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suspect her of forgetting one she loved as she did her brother. My uncle Charles is enshrined in her memory too fondly for time to efface it."

Tears rose to Mordaunt's eager eyes at these words; he turned aside a moment to conceal his agitation, then asked if Sir George Wilmot ever spoke of Manvers. Animatedly Edward related the old Admiral's agitation the first night he had seen him at Oakwood; how feelingly he had spoken of one, whom he said he had ever regarded as the adopted son of his affections, the darling of his childish years, his gallant, merry Charles. Mordaunt twined his arm in Edward's, and looked up in his face, as if to thank him for the consolation his words imparted. Again there was an expression in his countenance, which sent a thrill to the young man's heart, but vainly he tried to discover wherefore.

We may here perhaps relate in a very few words Mordaunt's tale of suffering, which he imparted at different times to Edward. The wreck of the vessel to which he belonged had cast him, with one or two others of his hapless companions, on the coast of Morocco and Algiers. There they were seized by the cruel Moors, and carried as spies before the Dey, and by his command immured in the dungeons of the fortress where many unhappy captives were also confined, and had been for many years. For eight years he was an inmate of these horrible prisons, a sickening witness of many of those tortures and cruelties which were inflicted on his fellow-prisoners, and often on himself. All those at all acquainted with the bombardment of Algiers, so ably carried on by Admiral Sir Edward Pellew, afterwards Viscount Exmouth, an enterprise which was entered on to avenge the atrocious indignities practised by the Dey on all the unfortunate foreigners that visited his coast, can well imagine the sufferings Mordaunt had not only to witness but to endure. On the first report of a hostile fleet appearing off the coast of Barbary, the most active and able of the prisoners were marched out to various markets and there sold as slaves. Mordaunt was one of these: imprisonment and suffering had not quenched his youthful spirit, nor so bowed his frame as to render him incapable of energy. Scarcely twenty when this cruel reverse of fortune overtook him, the tortures of his mind during the eight, nearly nine, years of his captivity may be better conceived than described. He had entered prison a boy, with all the fresh, elastic buoyancy of youth, he quitted it a man; but oh, how was that manhood's prime, to which in his

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visions of futurity he had looked with such bright anticipation as the zenith of his naval fame, now about to pass? as a slave; exposed to increased oppression and indignity on account of his religion, which he had inwardly vowed never to give up. He secured the Bible, which had first been a treasure to him merely as the gift of a beloved sister, and throughout all his change of destiny it was never taken from him. To submit calmly to slavery, Mordaunt felt at first his spirit never could, and various were the schemes he planned, and in part executed, towards obtaining his freedom, but all were eventually frustrated by the observation of his masters, who were too well accustomed to insubordination on the part of their slaves for such attempts to cause them much trouble or uneasiness. Still Mordaunt despaired not; still was the hope of freedom uppermost in his breast, even when he became the property of a Turk, who, had he been but a Christian, Mordaunt declared, must have commanded his reverence if not his affection. Five times he had been exposed for sale, and each master had appeared to him more cruel and oppressive than the last. To relate all he suffered would occupy a much larger portion of our tale than we could allow, but they were such that any one but Mordaunt would have felt comparative contentment and happiness when changed for the service of Mahommed Ali, an officer of eminence in the court of Tunis. He was indeed one who might well exemplify the assertion, that in all religions there is some good. Suffering and sorrow were aliens from his roof, misery approached not his doors, and Mordaunt had, in fact, been purchased from motives of compassion, which his evident wretchedness, both bodily and mental, had excited; to cure his bodily ills no kindly attention was spared, but vainly Mahommed Ali sought to lessen the load of anguish he saw imprinted on the brow of his Christian captive. Mordaunt's noble spirit was touched by the indulgence and kindness he received, and he made no effort to escape, for he felt it would be but an ungenerous, dishonorable return—but still he was a slave. No fetters galled his limbs, but the fetters of slavery galled his spirit with a deeper anguish; no task-master was now set over him with the knotted whip, to spur on each slackening effort; but the groan which no bodily suffering could wring, which he had suppressed, lest his persecutors should triumph, now burst from his sorrowing heart, and scalding drops stole down his cheeks, when he deemed no eye was near. Slavery, slavery seemed his for ever, and each fond vision of his native land and all he loved but added to the burden on his soul.

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Mahommed at length became so deeply interested in his Christian slave, that he offered him freedom, wealth, distinction, his own friendship and support, all on the one, he thought, simple and easy condition of giving up his country and his faith, and embracing the one holy creed of Mahomet. In kindness was the offer made, but mournfully, yet with a steadiness that gave no hope of change, was it refused; vainly Mahomet urged the happiness its acceptance would bring, that he knew not all he so rashly refused; still he wavered not, and Ali with a weary heart gave up the attempt. Time passed, but its fleeting years reconciled not Mordaunt to his situation, nor lessened the kindly interest he excited in the heart of the good old man; and when at length it happened that Mordaunt, almost unconsciously to himself, became the fortunate instrument of reconciling some affairs of his master, which were in confusion, and had been so for years, when, among many other unexpected services which it had been in his power to perform, he rescued the favorite son of Mahommed from an infuriated tiger, which had unexpectedly sprung upon him during a hunting expedition, the old man could contain his wishes no longer, but gave him his freedom on the spot. Unconditional liberty to return to his native land was very soon after accorded, and loading him with rich gifts, Ali himself accompanied him to the deck of the Alma, which was the only vessel then starting from the coast of Guinea, where Mahommed in general resided. Mordaunt was too impatient to wait for an English vessel, nor did he wish to incur the risk of encountering any hostile to his interests, by crossing the country and embarking from Algiers or Tunis. While in Africa he felt that the chain of slavery still hovered round his neck. He could not feel himself once more a freeborn Briton till he was indeed on the bounding ocean.

Once on the way to Europe, there was hope, even though that way was by America. He parted from his former master, now his friend, with a feeling of regret; but the fresh breezes, the consciousness he stood on deck free as the wind, free as the ocean that bore him onward to his native land, removed from his mind all lingering dread, and filled his soul with joy; but the human heart is not now in a state to feel for any length of time unchecked happiness. Four-and-twenty years had elapsed since Mordaunt had been imagined dead; six-and twenty since he had departed from his native land, and had last beheld his friends he so dearly loved. He might return

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and be by all considered an intruder, perhaps not recognized, his tale not believed; he might see his family scattered, all of them with new ties, new joys, and with no place for the long-absent exile. The thought was anguish, but Mordaunt had weakly indulged it too long to enable him at first to conquer it, even when Edward's tale of the fond remembrance in which his uncle was held by all who had loved him, unconsciously penetrated his soul with a sense of the injustice he had done his friends, and brought consolation with it.

These facts, which we have so briefly thrown together, formed most interesting subjects to Edward many times during his voyage to New-York. Edward hung as in fascination on the stranger's history, innate nobleness was stamped in every word. More than once the thought struck him that he was more than what he appeared to be, but Edward knew he had a slight tendency towards romance in his composition, and fearful of lowering himself in the estimation of his new-found friend by the avowal of such fanciful sentiments, he kept them to himself.

At length the wished-for port to both the Englishmen (New-York) was gained, and their passage secured in the first packet sailing for England. Edward's heart beat high with anticipated pleasure; he longed to introduce his new friend to his family, and his bright anticipations shed a kindred glow over the mind of Mordaunt, who had now become so devotedly attached to the youth, that he could scarcely bear him out of his sight; and had he wanted fresh incentive to affection, the deep affliction of the young sailor on receiving the intelligence of his cousin Herbert's death, would have been sufficient. Edward had one day sought the post-office, declaring, however, that it was quite impossible such increased joy could be in store for him, as a letter from home. There were two instead of one: one from his aunt and uncle, the other from his sister; the black seal painfully startled him. Mourning for poor Mary is over long ere this, he thought, and scarcely had he strength to break the seal, and when he had read the fatal news, he sat for some time as if overwhelmed with the sudden and unexpected blow.

Mordaunt's words of consolation fell at first unheeded on his ear; it was not for Herbert alone he sorrowed, it was for his aunt. He knew how devotedly she loved her son, and though she did not write much on the actual loss she had sustained, yet every word seemed to reach his heart, and Edward

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leaned his head upon the paper, and wept like a child. Herbert, the bright, the good, the gentle companion of his boyhood, the faithful friend of his maturer years, had he indeed gone—his place would know him no more? And oh, how desolate must Oakwood seem. Percy, though in affection for his parents and his family, in his devoted attention to their comfort, equalled only by his brother, yet never could he be to Oakwood as Herbert. He was as the brilliant plant, shedding lustre indeed on all over whom it gleamed, but never still, continually roving, changing its course, as if its light would be more glittering from such unsteady movements; but Herbert was as the mild and lucid star, stationary in its appointed orbit, gilding all things with its mellow light, but darting its most intense and radiant lustre on that home which was to him indeed the centre-point of love. Such was the description of his two cousins given by Edward to his sympathizing companion, and Mordaunt looked on the young sailor in wondering admiration. Eagerly, delightedly, he had perused the letters, which Edward intrusted to him; that of Mrs. Hamilton was pressed to his lips, but engrossed in his own thoughts, Edward observed him not. Sadness lingered on Edward's heart during the whole of that voyage homeward; his conversation was tinged with the same spirit, but it brought out so many points of his character, which in his joyous moods Mordaunt never could have discovered, that the links of that strangely-aroused affection became even stronger than before. Edward returned his regard with all the warmth of his enthusiastic nature, strengthened by the manner in which his letters from home alluded to Lieutenant Mordaunt as his preserver; and before their voyage was completed, Mordaunt, in compliance with the young man's earnest entreaty, consented to accompany him, in the first place, to Richmond, whence Edward promised, after introducing him to his family, and finding him a safe harbor there, he would leave no stone unturned to discover every possible information concerning Mordaunt's family. That same peculiar smile curled the stranger's lips as Edward thus animatedly spoke, and he promised unqualified compliance.

Having thus brought Edward and his friend within but a few weeks' voyage to England, we may now leave them and return to Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, who were both rejoicing in the improved looks of their niece at Richmond.

The delightful calmness of their beautiful retreat, the suspension of all anxiety, the total change of scene which was

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around them, had done much towards restoring peace, not only to Ellen but to her aunt. The feeling that she was now in deed called upon to fulfil the promise she had made to Herbert, that the enjoyment and cheerfulness of home depended on her alone, had inspired exertions which had partially enabled her to conquer her own grief; and every week seemed to bring forward some new quality, of which her relatives imagined they must have been ignorant before. Ellen's character was one not to attract at first, but to win affection slowly but surely; her merits were not dazzling, it was generally long before they were all discovered, but when they were, they ever commanded reverence and love. In all her children Mrs. Hamilton felt indeed her cares fully repaid, and in Ellen more, far more than she had ventured to anticipate. Thus left alone in her filial cares, Ellen's character appeared different to what it had been when one of many. Steady, quiet cheerfulness was restored to the hearts of all who now composed the small domestic circle of Mr. Hamilton's family; each had their private moments when sorrow for the loss of their beloved Herbert was indeed recalled in all its bitterness, but such sacred hours never were permitted to tinge their daily lives with gloom.

They were now in daily expectation of St. Eval's return to England, with Miss Manvers, who, at Mrs. Hamilton's particular request, was to join their family party. An understanding had taken place between her and Percy, but not yet did either intend their engagement to be known. The sympathy and affection of Louisa were indeed most soothing to Percy in this affliction, which, even when months had passed, he could not conquer, but he could not think of entering into the bonds of marriage, even with the woman he sincerely loved, till his heart could, in some degree, recover the deep wound which the death of his only brother had so painfully inflicted. To his parents indeed, and all his family, he revealed his engagement, and Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton anxiously anticipated the return of Lord and Lady St. Eval, to introduce them to the intended bride of their only son. Their intention was to remain at Richmond till the spring, when Arthur and his wife would pay their promised visit at Oakwood, instead of spending the Christmas with them—an arrangement Emmeline had herself suggested; because, she said, if she and her husband were away, the family party which had ever assembled at Oakwood during that festive season would be

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broken up, and Herbert's absence be less painfully felt. Mrs Hamilton noticed it to none, but her penetration discovered the cause of this change in Emmeline's intentions, and tears of delicious feeling filled her eyes, as for a moment she permitted that gentle and affectionate girl to occupy that thought which she was about to bestow on Herbert.

"We have received interesting news this morning, my dear Arthur," Mrs. Hamilton said, as her husband entered the parlor, where she and Ellen were seated. "Lucy Harcourt is returning to England, and has requested us to look out for a little cottage for her near Oakwood. The severe illness, and finally the death of her cousin, Mr. Seymour, has been the cause of my not hearing from her so long. Poor fellow, he has been for so many years such a sad sufferer, that a peaceful death must indeed be a blessed release."

"It was a peaceful death, Lucy writes, mournfully but resignedly; she says she cannot be sufficiently thankful that he was spared long enough to see his daughters would both be happy under her charge. That she had gained their young affections, and that, as far as mortal eye could see, by leaving them entirely under her guardianship and maternal care, he had provided for their happiness. He said this almost with his last breath; and poor Lucy says that, among her many consolations in this trying time, this assertion was not one of the least precious to her heart."

"No doubt it was. To be the friend and adopted mother of his children must be one of the many blessings created for herself by her noble conduct in youth. I am glad now my prophecy was not verified, and that she never became his wife."

"Did you ever think she would, uncle?" asked Ellen, surprised.

"I fancied Seymour must have discovered her affection, and then admiration on his part would have done the rest. It is, I own, much better as it is; his children will love her more, regarding her in the light of his sister and their aunt, than had she become their stepmother. But why did you seem so surprised at my prophecy, Nelly? Was there any thing very impossible in their union?"

"Not impossible; but I do not think it likely Miss Harcourt would have betrayed her affection, at the very time when she was endeavoring to soothe her cousin for the loss of a beloved wife. She was much more likely to conceal it, even more

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effectually than she had ever done before. Nor do I think it probable Mr. Seymour, accustomed from his very earliest years to regard her as a sister, could ever succeed in looking on her in any other light."

"You seem well skilled in the history of the human heart, my little Ellen," said her uncle, smiling. "Do you think it then quite impossible for cousins to love?"

Ellen bent lower over her embroidery-frame, for she felt a tell-tale blush was rising to her cheek, and without looking up, replied, calmly,

"Miss Harcourt is a proof that such love can and does exist—more often, perhaps, in a woman's heart. In a man seldom, unless educated and living entirely apart from each other."

"I think you are right, Ellen," said her aunt. "I never thought, with your uncle, that Lucy would become Mr. Seymour's wife."

"Had I prophesied such a thing, uncle, what would you have called me?" said Ellen, looking up archly from her frame, for the momentary flush had gone.

"That it was the prophecy of a most romantic young lady, much more like Emmeline's heroics than the quiet, sober Ellen," he answered, in the same tone; "but as my own idea, of course it is wisdom itself. But jokes apart, as you are so skilled in the knowledge of the human heart, my dear Ellen, you must know I entered this room to-day for the purpose of probing your own."

"Mine!" exclaimed the astonished girl, turning suddenly pale; "what do you mean?"

"Only that the Rev. Ernest Lacy has been with me this morning, entreating my permission to address you, and indeed making proposals for your hand. I told him that my permission he could have, with my earnest wishes for his success, and that I did not doubt your aunt's consent would be as readily given. Do not look so terribly alarmed; I told him I could not let the matter proceed any farther without first speaking to you."

"Pray let it go no farther, then, my dear uncle," said Ellen, very earnestly, as her needle fell from her hand, and she turned her eyes beseechingly on her uncle's face. "I thank Mr. Lacy for the high opinion he must have of me in making me this offer, but indeed I cannot accept it. Do not, by your consent let him encourage hopes which must end in disappointment."

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"My approbation I cannot withdraw, Ellen, for most sincerely do I esteem the young man; and there are few whom I would so gladly behold united to my family as himself. Why do you so positively refuse to hear him? You may not know him sufficiently now, I grant you, to love him, yet believe me, the more you know him the more will you find in him both to esteem and love."

"I do not doubt it, my dear uncle. He is one among the young men who visit here whom I most highly esteem, and I should be sorry to lose his friendship by the refusal of his hand."

"But why not allow him to plead for himself? You are not one of those romantic beings, Ellen, who often refuse an excellent offer, because they imagine they are not violently in love."

"Pray do not condemn me as such, my dear uncle; indeed, it is not the case. Mr. Lacy, the little I know of him, appears to possess every virtue calculated to make an excellent husband. I know no fault to which I can bring forward any objection; but"—

"But what, my dear niece? Surely, you are not afraid of speaking freely before your aunt and myself?"

"No, uncle; but I have little to say except that I have no wish to marry; that it would be more pain to leave you and my aunt than marriage could ever compensate."

"Why, Nelly, do you mean to devote yourself to us all your young life, old and irritable as we shall in all probability become? think again, my dear girl; many enjoyments, much happiness, as far as human eye can see, await the wife of Lacy. Emmeline, you are silent; do you not agree with me in wishing to behold our gentle Ellen the wife of one so universally beloved as this young clergyman?"

"Not if her wishes lead her to remain with us, my husband," replied Mrs. Hamilton, impressively. She had not spoken before, for she had been too attentively observing the fluctuation of Ellen's countenance; but now her tone was such as to check the forced smile with which her niece had tried to reply to Mr. Hamilton's suggestion of becoming old and irritable, and bring the painfully-checked tears back to her eyes, too powerfully to be restrained. She tried to retain her calmness, but the effort was vain, and springing from her seat, she flew to the couch where her aunt sat, and kneeling by her side, buried her face on her shoulder, and murmured, almost inaudibly,

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"Oh, do not, do not bid me leave you, I am happy here; but elsewhere, oh, I should be so very, very wretched. I own Mr. Lacy is all that I could wish for in a husband; precious, indeed, would be his love to any girl who could return it, but not to me; oh, not to one who can give him nothing in return."

She paused abruptly; the crimson had mounted to both cheek and brow, and the choking sob prevented farther utterance.

Mrs. Hamilton pressed her lips to Ellen's heated brow in silence, while her husband looked at his niece in silent amazement.

"Are your affections then given to another, my dear child?" he said, gently and tenderly; "but why this overwhelming grief, my Ellen? Surely, you do not believe we could thwart the happiness of one so dear to us, by refusing our consent to the man of your choice, if he be worthy of you? Speak then, my dear girl, without reserve; who has so secretly gained your young affections, that for his sake every other is rejected?"

Ellen raised her head and looked mournfully in her uncle's face. She tried to obey, but voice for a moment failed.

"*My love is given to the dead*," she murmured at length, clasping her aunt's hands in hers, the words slowly falling from her parched lips; then added, hurriedly, "oh, do not reprove my weakness; I thought my secret never would have passed my lips in life, but wherefore should I hide it now? It is no sin to love the dead, though had he lived, never would I have ceased to struggle till this wild pang was conquered, till calmly I could have beheld him happy with the wife of his choice, of his love. Oh, condemn me not for loving one who never thought of me save as a sister; one whom I knew from his boyhood loved another. None on earth can tell how I have struggled to subdue myself. I knew not my own heart till it was too late to school it into apathy. He has gone, but while my heart still clings to Herbert only, oh, can I give my hand unto another?"

"Herbert!" burst from Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton at the same instant, and Ellen, turning from their glance, hid her flushing and paling cheek, in her hands; for a moment there was silence, and then Mrs. Hamilton drew the agitated girl closer to her, and murmuring, in a tone of intense feeling, "my poor, poor Ellen!" mingled a mother's tears with those of her niece. Mr. Hamilton looked on them both with extreme emotion; his mind's eye rapidly glanced over the past, and in an instant he saw what a heavy load of suffering must

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have been his niece's portion from the first moment she awoke to the consciousness of her ill-fated love; and how had she borne it? so uncomplainingly, so cheerfully, that no one could suspect that inward sorrow. When cheering himself and his wife under their deep affliction, it was with her own heart breaking all the while. When inciting Herbert to exertion, during that painful trial occasioned by his Mary's letter, when doing every thing in her power to secure his happiness, what must have been her own feelings? Yes, in very truth she had loved—loved with all the purity, the self-devotedness of woman; and Mr. Hamilton felt that which at the moment he could not speak. He raised his niece from the ground, where she still knelt beside her aunt, folded her to his bosom, kissed her tearful cheek, and placing her in Mrs. Hamilton's arms, hastily left the room.

The same thoughts had likewise occupied the mind of her aunt, as Ellen still seemed to cling to her for support and comfort; but they were mingled with a sensation almost amounting to self-reproach at her own blindness in not earlier discovering the truth. Why not imagine Ellen's affection's fixed on Herbert as on Arthur Myrvin? both were equally probable. She could now well understand Ellen's agitation when Herbert's engagement with Mary was published, when he performed the marriage ceremony for Arthur and Emmeline; and when Mrs. Hamilton recalled how completely Ellen had appeared to forget herself, in devotedness to her; how, instead of weakly sinking beneath her severe trials, she had borne up through all, had suppressed her own suffering to alleviate those of others, was it strange that admiration and respect should mingle with the love she bore her? that from that hour Ellen appeared dearer to her aunt than she had ever done before? Nor was it only on this account her affection increased. For the sake of her beloved son it was that her niece refused to marry; for love of him, even though he had departed, her heart rejected every other love; and the fond mother, unconsciously, felt soothed, consoled. It seemed a tribute to the memory of her sainted boy, that he was thus beloved, and she who had thus loved him—oh, was there not some new and precious link between them?

It was some time before either could give vent in words to the feelings that swelled within. Ellen's tears fell fast and unrestrainedly on the bosom of her aunt, who sought not to check them, for she knew how blessed they must be to one who

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so seldom wept; and they were blessed, for a heavy weight seemed removed from the orphan's heart, the torturing secret was revealed; she might weep now without restraint, and never more would her conduct appear mysterious either to her aunt or uncle. They now knew it was no caprice that bade her refuse every offer of marriage that was made her. How that treasured secret had escaped her she knew not. She had been carried on by an impulse she could neither resist nor understand. At the first, a sensation of shame had overpowered her, that she could thus have given words to an unrequited affection; but ere long, the gentle soothing of her aunt caused that painful feeling to pass away. Consoling, indeed, was the voice of sympathy on a subject which to another ear had never been disclosed. It was some little time ere she could conquer her extreme agitation, her overcharged heart, released from its rigorous restraint, appeared to spurn all effort of control; but after that day no violent emotion disturbed the calm serenity that resumed its sway. Never again was the subject alluded to in that little family circle, but the whole conduct of her aunt and uncle evinced that they felt for and with their Ellen; confidence increased between them, and after the first few days, the orphan's life was more calmly happy than it had been for many a long year.

The return of Lord St. Eval's family to England, and their meeting with Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, was attended with some alloy. Caroline and her parents had not met since the death of Herbert, and that affliction appeared at the first moment recalled in all its bitterness. The presence of a comparative stranger, as was Miss Manvers, did much towards calming the excited feelings of each, and the exertions of Lord St. Eval and Ellen restored composure and cheerfulness sooner than they could have anticipated.

With Miss Manvers Mrs. Hamilton was much pleased Gentle and unassuming, she won her way to every heart that knew her; she was the only remaining scion of Mrs. Hamilton's own family, and she felt pleased that by her union with Percy the families of Manvers and Hamilton would be yet more closely connected. She had regretted much, at a former time, the extinction of the line of Delmont; for she had recalled those visions of her girlhood, when she had looked to her brother to support the ancient line, and gilding it with naval honors, bid it stand forth as it had done some centuries before. Mrs. Hamilton had but little of what is termed family

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pride, but these feelings were associated with the brother whom she had so dearly loved, and whose loss she so painfully deplored.

The season of Christmas passed more cheerfully than Ellen had hoped for. The scene had entirely changed; never before had they passed a Christmas any where but at Oakwood, and that simple circumstance prevented the void in that domestic circle from being so sadly felt. That Herbert was in the thoughts of all his family, that it was an effort for them to retain the cheerfulness which in them was ever the characteristic of the season, we will not deny, but affliction took not from the calm beauty which ever rested round Mr. Hamilton's hearth. All appeared as if an even more hallowed and mellowed light was cast around them; for it displayed, even more powerfully than when unalloyed prosperity was their portion, the true beauty of the religious character. Herbert and Mary were not lost to them; they were but removed to another sphere, the eternal Home, to which all who loved them looked with an eye of faith.

Sir George Wilmot was the only guest at Richmond during the Christmas season, but so long had he been a friend of the family and of Lord Delmont's, when Mrs. Hamilton was a mere child, that he could scarcely be looked on in the light of a mere guest. The kind old man had sorrowed deeply for Herbert's death, had felt himself attracted even more irresistibly to his friends in their sorrow than even in their joy, and so constantly had he been invited to make his stay at Mr. Hamilton's residence, wherever that might be, that he often declared he had now no other home. The tale of Edward's peril interested him much; he would make Ellen repeat it over and over again, and admire the daring rashness which urged the young sailor not to defer his return to his commander, even though a storm was threatening around him; and when Mr. Hamilton related the story of Ellen's fortitude in bearing as she did this painful suspense, the old man would conceal his admiration of his young friend under a joke, and laughingly protest she was as fitted to be a gallant sailor as her noble brother.

On the character of the young heir of Oakwood the death of his brother appeared to have made an impression, which neither time nor circumstances could efface. He was not outwardly sad, but his volatile nature appeared departed. He was no longer the same wild, boisterous youth, ever on the

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look-out for some change, some new diversion or practical joke, which had been his characteristics while Herbert lived. A species of quiet dignity was now his own, combined with a devotedness to his parents, which before had never been so distinctly visible. He had ever loved them, ever sought their happiness, their wishes in preference to his own. Herbert himself had not surpassed him in filial love and reverence, but now, though his feelings were the same, their expression was different; cheerful and animated he still was, but the ringing laugh which had so often echoed through the halls of Oakwood had gone. It seemed as if the death of a brother so beloved, had suddenly transformed Percy Hamilton from the wild and thoughless pleasure-seeking, joke-loving lad, into the calm and serious man. To the eyes of his family, opposite as the brothers in youth had been, there were now many points of Herbert's character reflected upon Percy, and dearer than ever he became: and the love which had been excited in the gentle heart of Louisa Manvers by the wild spirits, the animation, the harmless recklessness, the freedom of thought and word, which had characterized Percy, when she first knew him, was purified and heightened by the calm dignity, the more serious thought, the solid qualities of the virtuous and honorable man.

Lieutenant Fortescue was now daily expected in England, much to the delight of his family and Sir George Wilmot, who declared he should have no peace till he was introduced to the preserver of his gallant boy, as he chose to call Edward. Lieutenant Mordaunt; he never heard of such a name, and he was quite sure he had never been a youngster in his cockpit. "What does he mean by saying he knows me, that he sailed with me, when a mid? he must be some impostor. Mistress Nell, take my word for it," Sir George would laughingly say, and vow vengeance on Ellen, for daring to doubt the excellence of his memory; as she one day ventured to hint that it was so very many years, it was quite impossible Sir George could remember the names of all the middies under him. It was much more probable, Sir George would retort, that slavery had bewildered the poor man's understanding, and that he fancied he was acquainted with the first English names he heard.

"Never mind, Nell, he has been a slave, poor fellow, so we will not treat him as an impostor, the first moment he reaches his native land," was the general conclusion of the old Admiral's jokes, as each day increased his impatience for Edward's return.

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He was gratified at length, and as generally happens, when least expected, for protesting he would not be impatient any more, he amused himself by setting little Lord Lyle on his knee, and was so amused by the child's playful prattle and joyous laugh, that he forgot to watch at the window, which was his general post. Ellen was busily engaged in nursing Caroline's babe, now about six months old.

"Give me Mary, Ellen," said the young Earl, entering the room, with pleasure visibly impressed on his features. "You will have somebody else to kiss in a moment, and unless you can bear joy as composedly as you can sorrow, why I tremble for the fate of my little Mary."

"What do you mean, St. Eval? you shall not take my baby from me, unless you can give me a better reason."

"I mean that Edward will be here in five minutes, if he be not already. Ah, Ellen, you will resign Mary now. Come to me, little lady," and the young father caught his child from Ellen's trembling hands, and dancing her high in the air, was rewarded by her loud crow of joy.

In another minute, Edward was in the room, and clasped to his sister's beating heart. It was an agitating moment, for it seemed to Ellen's excited fancy that Edward was indeed restored to her from the dead, he had not merely returned from a long and dangerous voyage. The young sailor as he released her from his embrace, looked with an uncontrolled impulse round the room. All were not there he loved; he did not miss Emmeline, but Herbert—oh, his gentle voice was not heard amongst the many that crowded round to greet him. He looked on his aunt, her deep mourning robe; he thought her paler, thinner, than he had ever seen her before, and the impetuous young man could not be restrained; he flung himself within her extended arms, and burst into tears.

Mr. Hamilton hastened towards them. "Our beloved Herbert is happy," he said, solemnly, as he wrung his nephew's hands. "Let us not mourn for him now, Edward, but rather rejoice, as, were he amongst us, he would do, gratefully rejoice that the same gracious hand which removed him in love to a brighter world was stretched over you in your hour of peril, and preserved you to those who so dearly love you. You, too, we might for a time have lost, my beloved Edward. Shall we not rejoice that you are spared us? Emmeline, my own Emmeline, think on the blessings still surrounding us."

His impressive words had their effect on both his agitated

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auditors. Edward gently withdrew himself from the detaining arms of his aunt; he pressed a long, lingering kiss upon her cheek, and hastily conquering his emotion, clasped Sir George Wilmot's extended hand, and after a few minutes' silence, greeted all his cousins with his accustomed warmth, and spoke as usual.

There had been one unseen, unthought-of spectator of this little scene; all had been too much startled and affected at Edward's unexpected burst of sorrow, to think of the stranger who had entered the room with him; but that stranger had looked around him, more particularly on Mrs. Hamilton, with feelings of intensity utterly depriving him of either speech or motion. Years had passed lightly over Mrs. Hamilton's head; she had borne trials, cares, and sorrows, as all her fellow-creatures do, but her burden had ever been cast upon Him who had promised to sustain her, and therefore on her it had not weighed so heavily; and years had neither bent that graceful figure, nor robbed her features of their bloom. Hers had never been extraordinary beauty. It had been the expression only which was ever the charm in her, an expression of such purity of thought and deed, of gentle unassuming piety. Time cannot triumph over that beauty which is reflected from the soul; and Mordaunt gazed on her till he could scarcely restrain himself from rushing forward, and clasping her to his bosom, proclaim aloud who and what he was; but he did command himself, though his limbs trembled under him, and he was thankful that as yet he was unobserved. He looked on the blooming family around him—they were her children, and yet to them he was as the dead; and now, would she indeed remember him? Edward suddenly recalled the presence of his friend, and springing towards him, with an exclamation of regret at his neglect, instantly attracted the attention of all, and Mordaunt suddenly found himself the centre of a group, who were listening with much interest to Edward's animated account of all he owed him, a recital which Mordaunt vainly endeavored to suppress, by declaring he had done nothing worth speaking of. Mrs. Hamilton joined her husband in welcoming the stranger, with that grace and kindness peculiarly her own. She thanked him warmly for the care he had taken, and the exertions he had made for her nephew; and as she did so, the color so completely faded from Mordaunt's sun burnt cheek, that Edward, declaring he was ill and exhausted by the exertions he had made from the first moment of their

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landing at Portsmouth, entreated him to retire to the chamber which had been prepared for him, but this Mordaunt refused, saying he was perfectly well.

"It is long since I have heard the voice of kindness in my native tongue—long since English faces and English hearts have thus blessed me, and would you bid me leave them, my young friend?"

His mournful voice thrilled to Mrs. Hamilton's heart, as he laid his hand appealingly on Edward's arm.

"Not for worlds," replied the young sailor, cheerfully. "Sir George Wilmot, my dear aunt, have you any recollection of my good friend here? he says he knew you both when he was a boy."

Sir George Wilmot's eyes had never moved from Mordaunt since he had withdrawn his attention from Edward, and he now replied somewhat gravely—

"Of the name of Mordaunt I have no recollection as being borne by any youngsters on board my ship, but those features seem strangely familiar to me. I beg your pardon, sir, but have you always borne that name?"

"From the time I can remember, Sir George, but this may perhaps convince you I have been on board your ship. Was there not one amongst us in the cockpit, a young lad whom you ever treated with distinguished favor, who, however unworthy, you ever held up to his comrades as a pattern of all that was excellent in a seaman and a youth, whom you ever loved and treated as a son? I was near him when he flung himself in the sea, with a sword in his mouth, and entering the enemy's ship by one of the cabin-windows, fought his way to the quarter-deck, and hauling down the French standard, retained his post till relieved by his comrades; and when the fight was over, hung back and gave to others the meed of praise you were so eager to bestow. Have you forgotten this, Sir George?"

"No!" replied the Admiral, with sudden animation. "Often have I recalled that day, one amongst the many in which my Charles distinguished himself."

"And you told him he would rise to eminence ere many years had passed—the name of Delmont would rival that of Nelson ere his career had run."

The old Admiral looked on the stranger with increased astonishment and agitation.

"Delmont! you knew my brother, then, Lieutenant Mor

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daunt," Mrs. Hamilton could not refrain from saying. "Many, many years have passed; yet tell me when you saw him last."

"I was with him in his last voyage, lady," replied the stranger, in a low and peculiar voice, for it was evidently an effort to retain his calmness. "Six-and-twenty years have gone by since the Leander left the coast of England never to return; six-and-twenty years since I set foot in my native land."

"And did all indeed perish save yourself? Were you alone saved? Saw you my brother after the vessel sunk?" inquired Mrs. Hamilton, hurriedly, laying her trembling hand on the stranger's arm, scarcely conscious of what she did. "He too might be spared even as yourself; but oh, death were preferable to lingering on his years in slavery."

"Alas! my Emmeline, wherefore indulge in such fallacious hope?" said her husband, tenderly, for he saw she was excessively agitated.

"Mrs. Hamilton," said Sir George Wilmot, earnestly, speaking at the same moment, "Emmeline, child of my best, my earliest friend, look on those features, look well; do you not know them? Six-and-twenty years have done their work, yet surely not sufficiently to conceal him from your eyes. Have you not seen that flashing eye, that curling lip, before? Look well ere you decide."

"Lady, Charles Manvers lives!" murmured the stranger, in the voice of one whom strong emotion deprived of utterance, and he pushed from his brow the hair which thickly clustered there, and in part concealed the natural expression of his features, and gazed on her face. A gleam of sunshine at this instant threw a sudden glow upon his countenance, and Mr. Hamilton started forward, and an exclamation of astonishment, of pleasure, escaped his lips, but Mrs. Hamilton's eyes moved not from the stranger's face.

"Emmeline, my sister, my own sister, will you not know me, can you not believe that Charles is spared?" he exclaimed in a tone of excited feeling.

"Oh God! it is Charles himself!" she sobbed, and sunk almost fainting in his embrace; convulsively the brother pressed her to his bosom. It seemed as if the happiness of that moment was too great for reality, as if it were but some dream of bliss; scarcely was he conscious of the warm greeting he received; the uncontrollable emotion of the old

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Admiral, who, as he wrung his hand again and again, wept like a child. His brain seemed to reel, and every object danced before his eyes, he was alone sensible that he held his sister in his arms, that sister whom he had loved even more devotedly, more constantly, in his hours of slavery than when she had been ever near him. Her counsels, her example, had had but little apparent effect on him when a wild and reckless boy at his father's house, but they had sustained him in his affliction; it was then he knew the value of those serious thoughts and feelings his sister had so labored to inculcate, and associated as they were with her, she became dearer each time he felt himself supported, under his many trials, by fervent prayer, and that implicit trust, of which she had so often spoken.

In wondering astonishment the younger members of the family had regarded this little scene some minutes before the truth had flashed on the mind of Mrs. Hamilton. Both St. Eval and Percy had guessed who in reality the stranger was, and waited in some anxiety for the effect that recognition would have on Mrs. Hamilton, whom Edward had already considerably agitated. With characteristic delicacy of feeling all then left the room, Sir George Wilmot and Mr. Hamilton alone remaining with the long-separated brother and sister.

"My uncle Charles himself! Fool, idiot that I was, never to discover this before," had been Edward's exclamation, in a tone of unrestrained joy.

A short time sufficed to restore all to comparative composure, but a longer interval was required for Charles Manvers, whom we must now term Lord Delmont, to ask and to answer the innumerable questions which were naturally called for by his unexpected return; much had he to hear and much to tell, even leaving, as he said he would, the history of his adventures in Algiers to amuse two or three winter evenings, when all his family were around him.

"All my family," he repeated, in a tone of deep feeling. "Do I say this? I, the isolated, desolate being I imagined myself; I who believed so many years had passed, that I should remain unrecognized, unloved, forgotten. Reproach me not, my sister, the misery I occasioned myself, the emotions of this moment are punishment enough. And are all those whom I saw here yours, Hamilton?" he continued more cheerfully. "Oh let me claim their love; I know them all

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already, for Edward has long ere this made me acquainted with them, both individually and as the united members of one affectionate family; I long to judge for myself if his account be indeed correct, though I doubt it not. Poor, fellow, I deserve his reproaches for continuing my deception to him so long."

"And why was that name assumed at all, dear Charles?" inquired Mr. Hamilton. "Why not resume your own, when the chains of slavery were broken?"

"And how dare you say Mordaunt was yours as long as you can remember?" demanded Sir George, holding up his hand in a threatening attitude, as if the full grown man before him were still the slight stripling he last remembered him. "Deception was never permitted on my decks, Master Charles."

Mrs. Hamilton smiled.

"Nor have I practised it, Sir George," he replied. "Mordaunt was my name, as my sister can vouch. Charles Mordaunt Manvers I was christened—Mordaunt being the name of my godfather, between whom and my father, however, a dispute arose, when I was about seven years old, completely setting aside old friendship, and causing them to be at enmity till Sir Henry Mordaunt's death. The tale was repeated to me when I was about ten years old, much exaggerated of course, and I declared I would bear his name no longer. I remember well my gentle sister Emmeline's entreaties and persuasions that I would not interfere—that I knew nothing about the quarrel, and had no right to be so angry. However, I carried my point, as I generally did, with my too indulgent parent, and therefore from that time I was only known as Charles Manvers, for my father could not bear the name spoken before him. Do you not remember it, Emmeline?"

"Perfectly well, now it is recalled, though I candidly own I had forgotten the circumstance."

"But, still, why was Manvers disused?" Mr. Hamilton again inquired.

"For perhaps an unjust and foolish fancy, my dear friend. I could not enjoy my freedom, because of the thought I mentioned before. I knew not if my loved father still lived, nor who bore the title of Lord Delmont, which, if he were no more, was mine by inheritance; for four-and-twenty years I had heard nothing of all whom I loved; they looked on me as

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dead: they might be scattered, dispersed; instead of joy, my return might bring with it sorrow, vexation, discontent. It was for this reason I relinquished the name of Manvers, and adopted the one I had well-nigh forgotten as being mine by an equal right; I wished to visit my native land unknown, and bearing that name, any inquiries I might have made would be unsuspected.

Surrounded by those whom in waking and sleeping dreams he had so long loved, the clouds which had overhung Lord Delmont's mind as a thick mist, even when he found himself free, dissolved before the calm sunshine of domestic love. A sense of happiness pervaded his heart—happiness chastened by a deep feeling of gratitude to Him who had ordained it. Affected he was almost to tears, as the manner of his nephew and nieces towards him unconsciously betrayed how affectionately they had ever been taught to regard his memory. Rapidly he became acquainted with each and all, and eagerly looked forward to the arrival of Emmeline and her husband to look on them likewise as his own: but though Edward laughingly protested he should tremble now for the continuance of his uncle's preference towards himself, he ever retained his place. He had been the first known; his society, his soothing words, his animated buoyancy of spirit, his strong affection and respect for his uncle's memory when he believed him dead, and perhaps the freemasonry of brother sailors, had bound him to Lord Delmont's heart with ties too strong to be riven. The more he heard of, and the more he associated with him in the intimacy of home, the stronger those feelings became; and Edward on his part unconsciously increased them by his devotedness to his uncle himself, the manner with which he ever treated Mrs. Hamilton, and his conduct to his sister, whose quiet and unselfish happiness at his return, and thus accompanied, was indeed heightened, more than she herself a few months previous, could have believed possible.

CHAPTER XXII.

Our little narrative must here transport the reader to a small cottage in the picturesque village of Llangwillan, where, about three months after the events we have narrated, Lilla Grahame sat one evening in solitude, and it seemed in sorrow. The

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room in which she was seated was small, but furnished and adorned with the refined and elegant taste of one whose rank appeared much higher than the general occupants of such a dwelling. A large window, reaching to the ground, opened on a smooth and sloping lawn, which was adorned by most beautiful flowers. It led to a small gate opening on a long, narrow lane, which led to the Vicarage, leaving the little church and its picturesque burying-ground a little to the right; the thick grove which surrounded it forming a leafy yet impenetrable wall to one side of the garden. There were many very pretty tombs in this churchyard; perhaps its beauty consisted in its extreme neatness, and the flowers that the vicar, Mr. Myrvin, took so much pleasure in carefully preserving. One lowly grave, beneath a large and spreading yew, was never passed unnoticed. A plain marble stone denoted that there lay one who had once been the brightest amid the bright, the brilliant star of a lordly circle. The name, her age, and two simple verses, were there inscribed; but around that humble grave there were sweet flowers flourishing more luxuriously than in any other part of the churchyard; the climbing honeysuckle twined its odoriferous clusters up the dark trunk of the storm-resisting yew. Roses of various kinds intermingled with the lowly violet, the snowdrop, lily of the valley, the drooping convolvulus, which, closing its petals for a time, is a fit emblem of that sleep which, closing our eyes on earth, reopens them in heaven, beneath the genial warmth of the sun of righteousness. These flowers were sacred in the eyes of the villagers, and their children were charged not to despoil them; and too deep was their reverence for their minister, and too sacred was that little spot of earth, even to their uncultured eyes, for those commands ever to be disobeyed. But it was not to Mr. Myrvin's care alone that part of the churchyard owed its beauty. It had ever been distinguished from the rest by the flowers around it; but it was only the last two years they had flourished so luxuriantly; the hand of Lilla Grahame watered and tended them with unceasing care. In the early morning or the calm twilight, she was seen beside the grave, and many might have believed that there reposed the ashes of a near and dear relation; but it was not so. Lilla had never seen and never known the lovely being whose last home she thus affectionately tended. It was dear to her from its association with him whom she loved; there her thoughts could wander to him

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and surely the love thus cherished beside the dead must have been purity itself.

It was the hour that Lilla usually sought the churchyard, but she came not, and the lengthening shadows of a soft and lovely May evening fell around the graceful figure of a tall and elegant young man, in naval uniform, who lingered beside the grave; pensive, it seemed, yet scarcely melancholy. His fine expressive countenance seemed to breathe of happiness proceeding from the heart, chastened and softened by holier thoughts. A smile of deep feeling encircled his lips as he looked on the flowers, which in this season were just bursting into beautiful bloom; and, plucking an early violet, he pressed it to his lips and placed it next his heart. "Doubly precious," he said, internally, "planted by the hand of her I love, it flourished on my mother's grave. Oh, my mother, would that you could behold your Edward now; that your blessings could be mine. It cannot be, and thrice blessed as I am, why should I seek for more?" A few moments longer he lingered, then turned in the direction of the Vicarage.

Lilla's spirits harmonized not as they generally did with the calm beauty of nature around her. Anxious and sorrowful, her tears more than once fell slowly and unheeded on her work; but little improvement had taken place in her father's temper. She had much, very much to bear, even though she knew he loved her, and that his chief cares were for her; retirement had not relieved his irritated spirit. Had he, instead of retreating from, mingled as formerly in, the world, he might have been much happier, for he would have found the dishonorable conduct of his son had not tarnished his own. He had been too long and too well known as the soul of honor and integrity, for one doubt or aspersion to be cast upon his name. Lady Helen's injudicious conduct towards her children was indeed often blamed, and Grahame's own severity much regretted, but it was much more of sympathy he now commanded than scorn or suspicion, and all his friends lamented his retirement. Had not Lilla's spirits been naturally elastic, they must have bent beneath these continued and painful trials; her young heart often felt breaking, but the sense of religion, the excellent principles instilled both by Mrs. Douglas and Mrs. Hamilton now had their full effect, and sustained her amidst all. She never wavered in her duty to her father; she never complained, even in her letters to her dearest and most confidential friends

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"Have you thought on the subject we spoke of last night, Lilla?" asked her father, entering suddenly, and seating himself gloomily on a chair some paces from her. His daughter started as she saw him, for the first tone of his voice betrayed he was more than usually irritable and gloomy.

"Yes, father, I have," she replied, somewhat timidly.

"And what is your answer?"

"I fear you will be displeased, my dear father; but indeed I cannot answer differently to last night."

"You are still resolved then to refuse Philip Clapperton?"

Lilla was silent.

"And pray may I ask the cause of your fastidiousness, Miss Grahame? Your burst of tears last night made a very pretty scene, no doubt, but they gave me no proper answer."

"It is not only that I cannot love Mr. Clapperton, father, but I cannot respect him."

"And pray why not? I tell you, Lilla, blunt, even coarse, if you like, as he is, unpolished, hasty, yet he has a better heart by far than many of these more elegant and attractive sprigs of nobility, amongst which perhaps your romantic fancy has wandered, as being the only husbands fitted for you."

"You do me injustice, father. I have never indulged in such romantic visions, but I cannot willingly unite my fate with one in whom I see no fixed principle of action—one who owns no guide but pleasure. His heart may be good, I doubt it not; but I cannot respect one who spends his whole life in fox-hunting, drinking, and all the pleasures peculiar to the members of country clubs."

"In other words, a plain, honest-speaking, English gentleman is not fine enough for you. What harm is there in the amusements you have enumerated? Why should not a fox-hunter make as good a husband as any other member of society?"

Lilla looked at her father with astonishment. These were not always his sentiments she painfully thought.

"I do not mean to condemn these amusements, my dear father, but when they are carried on without either principle or religion. How can I venture to intrust my happiness to such a man?"

"And where do you expect to find either principle or religion now? Not in those polished circles, where I can per

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ceive your hopes are fixed. Girl, banish such hopes. No one amongst them would unite himself to the sister of that dishonored outcast, Cecil Grahame."

Grahame's whole frame shook as he pronounced his son's name, but sternness still characterized his voice.

"Never would I unite myself with one who considered himself degraded by a union with our family, father, be assured," said Lilla, earnestly. "My hopes are not high. I have thought little of marriage, and till I am sought have no wish to leave this sequestered spot, believe me."

"And who, think you, will seek you here? You had better banish such idle hopes, for they will end in disappointment."

"Be it so, then," Lilla replied, calmly, though had her father been near her, he would have seen her cheek suddenly become pale, and her eyelids quiver, as if by the pressure of a tear. "Is marriage a thing so indispensable, that you would compel me to leave you, my dear father?"

"To you it *is* indispensable; when once you have lost the name you now hold, the world and all its pleasures will be spread before you, the stain will be remembered no more; your life need not be spent in gloom and exile like this."

"And what, then, will become of you?"

"Of me! who cares? What am I, and what have I ever been to either of my children that they should care for me? I scorn the mere act of duty, and which of you can love? no, Lilla, not even you."

"Father, you do me wrong; oh, do not speak such cruel words," said Lilla, springing from her seat, and flinging herself on her knees by her father's side. "Have I indeed so failed in testimonies of love, that you can for one instant believe it is only the duty of a child I feel and practise? Oh, my father, do me not such harsh injustice; could you read my inmost heart, you would see how full it is of love and reverence for you, though I have not always courage to express it. Ask of me any, every proof but this, and I will do it; but, oh, do not command me to wed Mr. Clapperton: why, oh, why would you thus seek to send me from you?"

"I speak but for your happiness, Lilla;" his voice somewhat softened. "You cannot be happy now with one so harsh, irritable, cruel, as I know I am too often."

"And would you compare the occasional irritation, proceeding from the failing health of a beloved father, with the

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fierce passion and constant impatience of a husband, with whom I could not have one idea in common, whom I could neither love nor reverence, to whom even my duty would be wretchedness? oh, my father, can you compare the two? Think of Mrs. Greville: Philip Clapperton ever reminds me of Mr. Greville, of what at least he must have been in his youth, and would you sentence me to all the misery that has been poor Mrs. Greville's lot and her children's likewise?"

"You do not know enough of Clapperton to judge him thus harshly, Lilla; I know him better, and I cannot see the faults against which you are so inveterate. Your sister chose a husband for herself, and how has she fared? is she happy?"

"Annie cannot be happy, father, even if her husband were of a very different character. She disobeyed; a parent's blessing hallowed not her nuptials, and strange indeed would it be were her lot otherwise; but though I cannot love the husband of your choice, you may trust me, father, without your consent and blessing, I will never marry."

"Do not say you *cannot* love Philip Clapperton, Lilla; when once his wife, you could not fail to do so. I would see you united to one who loves you, my child, ere your affections are bestowed on another, who may be less willing to return them."

Grahame spoke in a tone of such unwonted softness, that the tears now rolled unchecked down Lilla's cheeks. Her ingenuous nature could not be restrained; she felt as if, were she still silent, she would be deceiving him, and hiding her face in her hand, she almost inaudibly said—

"For that, then, it is too late, father; I cannot love Mr. Clapperton, because—because I love another."

"Ha!" exclaimed Grahame, starting, then laying his trembling hand on Lilla's head, he continued, struggling with strong emotion, "this, then, is the cause of your determined refusal. Poor child, poor child, what misery have you formed for yourself!"

"And wherefore misery, my father?" replied Lilla, raising her head somewhat proudly, and speaking as firmly as her tears would permit. "Your child would not have loved had she not deemed her affections sought, ay, and valued too. Think not I would degrade myself by giving my heart to any one who deemed me or my father beneath his notice. If ever eye or act can speak, I do not love in vain."

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"And would you believe in trifles such as these?" asked her father, sorrowfully. "Alas! poor child, words are often false, still less can you rely on the language of the eye. Has any thing like an understanding taken place between you?"

"Alas! my father, no; and yet—and yet—oh, I know he loves me."

"And so he may, my child, and yet break his own heart and yours, poor guileless girl, rather than unite himself with the dishonored and the base. Lilla, my own Lilla, I have been harsh and cruel; it is because I feel too keenly perhaps the gall in which your wretched brother's conduct has steeped your life and mine; mine will soon pass away, but the dark shadow will linger still round you, my child, and condemn you to wretchedness. I cannot, cannot bear that thought!" and he struck his clenched hand against his brow.

"Why on the innocent should fall the chastisement of the guilty? My child, my child, oh banish from your unsuspecting heart the hopes of love returned. Where in this selfish world will you find one to love you so for yourself alone, that family and fortune are as naught?"

"Why judge so harshly of your sex, Mr. Grahame?" said a rich and thrilling voice, in unexpected answer to his words, and the same young man whom we before mentioned as lingering by a village grave, stepping lightly from the terrace on which the large window opened into the room, stood suddenly before the astonished father and his child. On the latter the effect of his presence was almost electric. The rich crimson mantled at once over cheek and brow and neck, a faint cry burst from her lips, and as the thought flashed across her, that her perhaps too presumptuous hopes of love returned had been overheard, as well as her father's words, she suddenly burst into tears of mingled feeling, and darting by the intruder, passed by the way he had entered into the garden; but even when away from him, composure for a time returned not. She forgot entirely that no name had been spoken either by her father or by herself to designate him whom she confessed she loved; her only feeling was, she had betrayed a truth, which from him she would ever have concealed, till he indeed had sought it; and injured modesty now gave her so much pain, it permitted her not to rejoice in this unexpected appearance of one whom she had not seen since she had believed him dead. She knew the churchyard was at this period of the evening quite deserted, and almost unconscious what she was about

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she hastily tied on her bonnet, and with the speed of a young fawn she bounded through the narrow lane, and rested not till she found herself seated beside her favorite grave; there she gave full vent to the thoughts in which pleasure and confusion somewhat strangely and painfully mingled.

"Can you, will you forgive this unceremonious and, I fear, unwished-for intrusion?" was the young stranger's address to Grahame, when he had recovered from the agitation which Lilla's emotion had called forth, he scarcely knew wherefore. "To me you have ever extended the hand of friendship, Mr. Grahame, however severe upon the world in general, and will you refuse it now, when my errand here is to seek an even nearer and a dearer name?"

"You are welcome, ever welcome to my humble home, my dear boy, for your own sake, and for those dear to you," replied Grahame, with a return of former warmth and cordiality. "More than usually welcome I may say, Edward, as this is your first visit here since your rescue from the bowels of the great deep. You look confused and heated, and as if you would much rather run after your old companion than stay with me, but indeed I cannot spare you yet. I have so many questions to ask you."

"Forgive me, Mr. Grahame, but indeed you must hear me first.

"I came here to speak to you on a subject nearest my heart, and till that is told, till from your lips I know my fate, do not, for pity, ask me to speak on any other. I meant not to have entered so abruptly on my mission, but that which Mr. Myrvin has imparted to me, and what I undesignedly overheard as I stood unseen on that terrace, have taken from me all the eloquence with which I meant to plead my cause."

"Speak in your own proper person, Edward, and then I may perhaps hear you," replied Grahame, from whom the sight of his young friend appeared to have banished all misanthropy. "What I can, however, have to do with your fate, I know not, except that I will acquit you of all intentional eaves-dropping, if it be that which troubles you; and what can Mr. Myrvin have said to rob you of eloquence?"

"He told me that—that you had encouraged Philip Clapperton's addresses to Lil—to Miss Grahame," answered Edward, with increasing agitation, for he perceived, what was indeed the truth, that Grahame had not the least idea of his intentions.

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"And what can that have to do with you, young man?" inquired Grahame, somewhat haughtily, and his brow darkened. "You have not seen Lilla, to be infected with her prejudices, and in what manner can my wishes with regard to my daughter on that head concern you?"

"In what manner? Mr. Grahame, I came hither with my aunt's and uncle's blessing on my purpose, to seek from you your gentle daughter's hand. I am not a man of many words, and all I had to say appears to have departed, and left me speechless. I came here to implore your consent, for without it I knew 'twere vain to think or hope to make your Lilla mine. I came to plead to you, and armed with your blessing, plead my cause to her, and you ask me how Mr. Myrvin's intelligence can affect,me. Speak, then, at once; in pity to that weakness which makes me feel as if my lasting happiness or misery depends upon your answer."

"And do you, Edward, do you love my poor child?" asked the father, with a quivering lip and glistening eye, as he laid his hand, which trembled, on the young man's shoulder.

"Love her, oh, Mr. Grahame, she has been the bright beaming star that has shone on my ocean course for many a long year. I know not when I first began to love, but from my cousin Caroline's wedding-day the thoughts of Lilla lingered with me, and gilded many a vision of domestic peace and love, and each time I looked on her bright face, and marked her kindling spirit, heard and responded inwardly to her animated voice, I felt that she was dearer still; and when again I saw her in her sorrow, and sought with Ellen to soothe and cheer her, oh, no one can know the pain it was to restrain the absorbing wish to ask her, if indeed one day she would be mine, but that was no time to speak of love. Besides, I knew not if I had the means to offer her a comfortable home, I knew not how long I might be spared to linger near her; but now, when of both I am assured, wherefore should I hesitate longer? With the title of captain, that for which I have so long pined, I am at liberty to retire on half-pay, till farther orders; the adopted son and acknowledged heir to my uncle, Lord Delmont, I have now enough to offer her my hand, without one remaining scruple. You are silent. Oh, Mr. Grahame, must I plead in vain?"

"And would you marry her, would you indeed take my child as your chosen bride?" faltered Grahame, deeply moved. 'Honored, titled as you are, my poor, portionless Lilla is no meet bride for you."

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"Perish honors and title too, if they could deprive me of the gentle girl I love," exclaimed the young captain, impetuously. "Do not speak thus, Mr. Grahame. In what was my lamented father better than yourself—my mother than Lady Helen? and if she were in very truth my inferior in birth, the virtues and beauty of Lilla Grahame would do honor to the proudest peer of this proud land."

"My boy, my gallant boy!" sobbed the agitated father, his irritability gone, dissolved, like the threatening cloud of a summer day beneath some genial sunbeam, and as he wrung Captain Fortescue's hand again and again in his, the tears streamed like an infant's down his cheek.

"*Will* I consent, *will* I give you my blessing? Oh, to see you the husband of my poor child would be *too, too* much happiness, happiness wholly, utterly undeserved. But, oh, Edward, can Mr. Hamilton, can Lord Delmont consent to your union with one, whose only brother is a disgraced, dishonored outcast, whose father a selfish, irritable misanthrope?"

"Can the misconduct of Cecil cast, in the eyes of the just and good, one shadow on the fair fame of his sister? No, my dear sir, it is you who have looked somewhat unkindly and unjustly on the world, as when you mingle again with your friends, in company with your children, you will not fail, with your usual candor, to acknowledge. A selfish, irritable misanthrope," he added, archly smiling. "You cannot terrify me, Mr. Grahame. I know the charge is false, and I dread it not."

"Ask me not to join the world again," said Grahame, hoarsely; "in all else, the duties of my children shall be as laws, but that"—

"Well, well, we will not urge it now, my dear sir," replied the young sailor cheerfully; then added, with the eager agitation of affection, "But Lilla, my Lilla. Oh, may I hope that she will in truth be mine? Oh, have I, can I have been too presumptuous in the thought I have not loved in vain?"

"Away with you, and seek the answer from her own lips," said Mr. Grahame, with more of his former manner than he had yet evinced, for he now entertained not one doubt as to Edward being the chosen one on whom his daughter's young affections had been so firmly fixed. "Go to her, my boy; she will not fly a second time, so like a startled hare, from your approach; tell her, had she told her father Edward Fortescue was the worthy object of her love, he would not thus have

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thrown a damp upon her young heart, he would not have condemned him as being incapable of loving her for herself alone. Tell her, too, the name of Philip Clapperton shall offend her no more. Away with you, my boy."

Edward awaited not a second bidding. In a very few minutes the whole garden had been searched, and Miss Grahame inquired for all over the house, then he bounded through the lane, and scarcely five minutes after he had quitted Mr. Grahame, he stood by the side of Lilla; the consciousness that she had confessed her love, that he might have overheard it, was still paramount in her modest bosom; and she would have avoided him, but quickly was her design prevented. Rapidly, almost incoherently, was the conversation of the last half hour repeated, and with all the eloquence of his enthusiastic nature, Edward pleaded his cause, and, need it be said, not in vain. Lilla neither wished nor sought to conceal her feelings, and long, long did those two young and animated beings remain in sweet and heartfelt commune beside that lowly grave.

"What place so fitted where to pledge our troth, my Lilla, as by my mother's resting place?" said Edward. "Would that she could look upon us now, and smile her blessing."

Happily indeed flew those evening hours unheeded by the young lovers. Grahame, on the entrance of his happy child, folded her to his bosom; his blessing descended on her head, mingled with tears, which sprung at once from a father's love and self-reproach at all the suffering his irritability had occasioned her. And that evening Lilla indeed felt that all her sorrows, all her struggles, all her dutiful forbearance, were rewarded. Not only was her long-cherished love returned, not only did she feel that in a few short months she would be her Edward's own; that he, the brave, the gallant, honored sailor, had chosen her in preference to any of those fairer and nobler maidens with whom he had so often associated; but her father, her dear father, was more like himself than he had been since her mother's death. He looked, he spoke the Montrose Grahame we have known him in former years. Edward had ever been a favorite with him, but he and Lilla had been so intimate from their earliest childhood, that he had never thought of him as a son; and when the truth was known, so truly did Grahame rejoice, that the bitterness in his earthly cup was well-nigh drowned by its present sweetness.

Innumerable were the questions both Lilla and Grahame had to ask, and Edward answered all with that peculiar joy

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ousness which ever threw a charm around him. The adventures of his voyage, his dangers, the extraordinary means of his long-lost uncle being instrumental in his preservation, Lord Delmont's varied tale, all was animatedly discussed till a late hour. A smile was on Grahame's lip, as his now awakened eye recalled the drooping spirits and fading cheek of his Lilla during those three months of suspense, when Captain Fortescue was supposed drowned, and the equally strange and sudden restoration to health and cheerfulness when Ellen's letter was received, detailing her brother's safety. Lilla's streaming eyes were hid on her lover's shoulder as he detailed his danger, but quickly her tears were kissed away; thankfulness that he was indeed spared, again filled her heart, and the bright smile returned. He accounted for not seeking them earlier by the fact that, while they remained at Richmond, his uncle, whose health, from long-continued suffering, was but weakly established, could not bear him out of his sight, and that he had entreated him not to leave him till they returned to Oakwood. This, young Fortescue afterwards discovered, was to give Lord Delmont time for the gratification of his wishes, which, from the time he had heard the line of Delmont was extinct, had occupied his mind. Many of his father's old friends recognized him at once. His father's and his sister's friends were eager to see and pay him every attention in their power. He found himself ever a welcome and a courted guest, and happiness, so long a stranger from his breast, now faded not again. To adopt Edward as his son, to leave him heir to his title and estate, was now, as it had been from the first moment he recognized his nephew, the dearest wish of his heart, "if it were only to fulfil Sir George Wilmot's prophecy," he jestingly told the old Admiral, who, with Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, warmly seconded his wishes. The necessary formula met with no opposition, and the same day that gave to Edward his promotion of captain, informed him of the secretly-formed and secretly-acted upon desire of his uncle.

In the time of Edward's grandfather, the Delmont estates, as some of our readers may remember, were, from the carelessness of stewards, and the complete negligence of their lord, in such an embarrassed state, as barely to return a sufficient income for the expenses of Lord Delmont's establishment. Affairs, however, were not in a worse state than that a little energy and foresight might remedy. The guardian of Henry Manvers, who, as we know already, became Lord Delmont

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when only three years old, had acted his part with so much straightforwardness and trust, that when Manvers came of age he found his estates in such a thriving condition, that he was a very much richer nobleman than many of his predecessors had been. Well able to discern true merit, and grateful for the services already rendered, his guardian, by his earnest entreaty, remained his agent during his residence with his mother and sister in Switzerland. There, living very much within his income, his fortune accumulated, and by his early death it fell to the Crown, from which Lord Belmont, on his return from his weary years of slavery, received it with the title of earl, bestowed to prove that the tale of a British sailor's sufferings and indignities had not fallen unheeded on the royal ear. The long-banished seaman was presented to his Majesty by the Duke of Clarence himself, and he had no need to regret the gracious interview. His intentions concerning the young officer, Captain Fortescue, met with an unqualified approval. Ardently loving his profession, the royal Duke thought the more naval heroes filled the nobility of his country the better for England, and an invitation to Bushy Park was soon afterwards forwarded, both to Lord Delmont and his gallant nephew.

Edward, already well-nigh beside himself by his unexpected promotion, no longer knew how to contain the exuberance of his spirits, much to the amusement of his domestic circle; particularly to his quiet gentle sister, who, as she looked on her brother, felt how truly, how inexpressibly her happiness increased with his prosperity. She too had wound herself round the heart of her uncle; she loved him, first for his partiality to her brother, but quickly her affection was extended to himself. Mrs. Hamilton had related to him every particular of her history with which he had been deeply and painfully affected, and as he quickly perceived how much his sister's gentle firmness and constant watchfulness had done towards forming the character of not only Edward and Ellen but of her own children, his admiration for her hourly increased.

A very few days brought Lord Delmont and his niece Ellen to Mr. Grahame's cottage, and Lilla's delight at seeing Ellen was only second to that she felt when Edward came. The presence, the cordial greeting of Lord Delmont, removed from the mind of Grahame every remaining doubt of his approbation of the bride his nephew had chosen. As a faithful historian, however, I must acknowledge the wishes of Lord Delmont had

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pointed out Lady Emily Lyle as the most suitable connection for Edward. Lady Florence he would have preferred, but there were many whispers going about that she was engaged to the handsome young baronet Sir Walter Cameron, who, by the death of his uncle Sir Hector, had lately inherited some extensive estates in the south-west of Scotland. When, however, Lord Delmont perceived his nephew's affections were irrevocably fixed, and he heard from his sister's lips the character of Lilla Grahame, he made no opposition, but consented with much warmth and willingness. He was not only content, but resolved on being introduced to Miss Grahame as soon as possible, without, however, saying a word to Edward of his intentions. He took Ellen with him, he said, to convoy him safely and secure him a welcome reception; neither of which, she assured him, he needed, though she very gladly accompanied him.

A few weeks passed too quickly by, imparting happiness even to Ellen, for had she been permitted the liberty of choosing a wife for her Edward, Lilla Grahame would have been her choice. Deeply and almost painfully affected had she been indeed, when her brother first sought her to reveal the secret of his love.

"I cannot," he said, "I will not marry without your sympathy, your approval, my sister—my more than sister, my faithful friend, my gentle monitress, for such you have ever been to me." And he folded her in his arms with a brother's love, and Ellen had concealed upon his manly bosom the glistening tears, whose source she scarcely knew. "I would have you love my wife, not only for my sake but for herself alone. Never will I marry one who will refuse to look on you with the reverential affection your brother does. Lilla Grahame does this, my Ellen; it was her girlish affection for you that first attracted my attention to her. She will regard you as I do; she will teach her children, if it please Heaven to grant us any, to look on you even as I would; her heart and home will be as open to my beloved sister as mine. Speak then, my ever cherished, ever faithful friend; tell me if, in seeking Lilla, your blessing will be mine."

Tears of joy choked her utterance, but quickly recovering herself, Ellen answered him in a manner calculated indeed to increase his happiness, and her presence at Llangwillan satisfied every wish.

Unable to resist the eloquent entreaties of all his friends

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and the appealing eyes of his child, Grahame at last consented to spend the month, which was to intervene ere his daughter's nuptials, at Oakwood. That period Edward intended to employ in visiting the ancient hall on the Delmont estate, which for the last three months had been in a state of active preparation for the reception of its long-absent master. It was beautifully situated in the vicinity of the New Forest, Hampshire. There Edward was to take his bride, considering the whole estate, his uncle declared, already as his own, as he did not mean to be a fixture there, but live alternately with his sister and his nephew. Oakwood should see quite as much of him as Beech Hill, and young people were better alone, particularly the first year of their marriage. Vainly Edward and Lilla sought to combat his resolution; the only concession they could obtain was, that when their honeymoon was over, he and Ellen would pay them a visit, just to see how they were getting on.

"You must never marry, Nelly, for I don't know what my sister will do without you," said Lord Delmont.

"Be assured, uncle Charles, I never will. I love the freedom of this old hall much too well; and, unless my aunt absolutely sends me away, I shall not go."

"And that she never will, Ellen," said Lilla, earnestly. "She said the other day she did not know how she should ever spare you even to us; but you must come to us very often, dearest Ellen. I shall never perform my part well as mistress of the large establishment with which Edward threatens me, without your counsel and support."

"I will not come at all, if you and Edward lay your wise heads together, as you already seem inclined to do, to win me by flattery," replied Ellen, playfully, endeavoring to look grave, though she refused not the kiss of peace for which Lilla looked up so appealingly.

The first week in July was fixed for the celebration of the two marriages in Mr. Hamilton's family. As both Edward and Percy wished the ceremony should take place in the parish church of Oakwood, and be performed by Archdeacon Howard, it was agreed the same day should witness both bridals: and that Miss Manvers, who had been residing at Castle Terryn with the Earl and Countess St. Eval, should accompany them to Oakwood a few days previous. Young Hamilton took his bride to Paris, to which capital he had been intrusted with some government commission. It was not till the end of July

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he had originally intended his nuptials should take place; but he did not choose to leave England for an uncertain period without his Louisa, and consequently it was agreed their honeymoon should be passed in France. It may be well to mention here that Mr. Hamilton had effected the exchange he desired, and that Arthur Myrvin and his beloved Emmeline were now comfortably installed in the Rectory, which had been so long the residence of Mr. Howard; and that Myrvin now performed his pastoral duties in a manner that reflected happiness not only on his parishioners, but on all his friends, and enabled him to enjoy that true peace springing from a satisfied conscience. He trod in the steps of his lamented friend; he knew not himself how often his poor yet contented flock compared him in their humble cottages with Herbert, and that in their eyes he did not lose by the comparison. Some, indeed, would say, "It is all Master Herbert's example, and the society of that sweet young creature, Miss Emmeline, that has made him what he is." But whatever might be the reason, Arthur was universally beloved; and that the village favorite, Miss Emmeline, who had grown up amongst them from infancy, was their Rector's wife; that she still mingled amongst them the same gentle, loveable being she had ever been; that it was to her, and not to a stranger, they were ever at liberty to seek for relief in trouble, or sympathy in joy, was indeed a source of unbounded pleasure; and Emmeline was happy, truly, gratefully happy. Never did she regret the choice she had made, nor envy her family the higher stations of life it was theirs to fill. She had not a wish beyond the homes of those she loved; her husband was all in all to her, her child a treasure for which she could not be sufficiently thankful. She was still the same playful, guileless being to her family which she had ever been; but to strangers a greater degree of dignity characterized her deportment, and commanded their involuntary respect. The home of Arthur Myrvin was indeed one over which peace and love had entwined their roseate wings; a lowly, yet a beauteous spot, over which the storms of the busy, troubled world, might burst but never reach; and for other sorrows piety and submission were alike their watchword and their safeguard. Lord St. Eval was the only person who regretted Arthur's promotion to the rectory of Oakwood, as it deprived him, he declared, of his chaplain, his vicar, and his friend. However, he willingly accepted a friend of Mr. Hamilton's to supply his place, a clergyman not much beyond the prime of life one

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who for seven years had devoted himself, laboriously and unceasingly, to a poor and unprofitable parish in one of the Feroe Islands; in the service of Mr. Hamilton he had been employed, though voluntarily he had accepted, nay, eloquently he had pleaded, for the office. To those of our readers who are acquainted with the story of Home Influence, the Rev. Henry Moreton is no stranger. They may remember that he accompanied Mr. Hamilton on his perilous expedition, and had joyfully consented to remaining there till the young Christian, Wilson, was capable of undertaking the ministry. He had done so; his pupil promised fair to reward his every care, and preserve his countrymen in that state of peace, prosperity, and virtue, to which they had been brought by the unceasing cares of Moreton; and that worthy man returned to his native land seven years after he had quitted it, improved not only in inward peace but in health, and consequently appearances. A perceptible lameness was now the only remains of what had been before painful deformity. The bracing air of the island had invigorated his nerves; the consciousness that he was active in the service of his fellow-creatures removed from his mind the morbid sensibility that had formerly so oppressed him; and Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton perceived, with benevolent pleasure, that life was to him no longer a burden. He had become a cheerful, happy member of society, willing to enjoy the blessings that now surrounded him with a truly chastened, grateful spirit: Oakwood and Castle Terryn were ever enlivened when he was present. After the cold and barren living at Feroe, exiled as he there had been from any of his own rank in life, the Vicarage at Castle Terryn and the society those duties included, formed to him indeed a happy resting-place, while his many excellent qualities soon reconciled St. Eval and his Countess to Myrvin's desertion, as they called his accepting the Rectory at Oakwood. No untoward event occurred to prevent the celebration of Percy and Edward's bridals as intended. They took place, attended with all that chastened joy and innocent festivity, which might have been expected from the characters of those principally concerned. No cloud obscured the happiness of the affectionate, united family, who witnessed these gladdening nuptials. Each might, perhaps, in secret have felt there was one blank in every heart, that when thus united, there was still a void on earth. In their breasts the fond memory of Herbert lingered still. Mr. Grahame forgot his moroseness, though he had resolved on returning to his

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cottage in Wales. He could feel nothing but delight as he looked on his Lilla in her chaste and simple bridal robes, and felt that of her he might indeed be proud. Fondly he dried the tear that fell from her bright eyes, as she clung to him in parting, and promised to see her soon, very soon, at Beech Hill.

It was the amusement of the village gossips for many a long evening to discuss, over and over again, the various merits of the two brides; some preferring the tearful, blushing Lilla, others the pale, yet composed and dignified demeanor of Miss Manvers. Some said Captain Fortescue looked much more agitated than he did when he saved his uncle's life off Dartmouth, some years before; it was marvellously strange for a brave young officer such as he, to be so flustered at such a simple thing as taking a pretty girl for better or worse. And Mr. Percy Hamilton, some said, was very much too serious for such a joyous occasion; if they had been Miss Manvers they should not have liked it—and so unlike himself, too.

"Hold your tongue, silly woman," a venerable old man interposed, at this part of the conversation, "the poor lad's thoughts were with his brother, to whom this day would have been as great a source of joy as to himself. He has not been the same man since dear Master Herbert's death, and no wonder, poor fellow."

This observation effectually put an end to the remarks on Percy's demeanor, and some owned, after all, marriage was somehow a solemn ceremony, and it was better to be too serious at such a time than too gay.

Percy and his bride stayed a week in London, and thence proceeded to Paris, which place, a very short scrutiny convinced Percy, was internally in no quiet condition; some disturbance, he was convinced, was threatening, though of what nature he could not at first comprehend. He had not, however, left England a fortnight before his family were alarmed by the reports which so quickly flew over to our island, of that extraordinary revolution which in three short days completely changed the sovereign dynasty of France, and threatened a renewal of those horrors which had deluged that fair capital with blood, in the time of the unfortunate Louis XVI. We have neither space nor inclination to enter into such details; some extracts of a letter from Percy, which Mr. Hamilton received, after a week of extreme anxiety on his account, we feel, however, compelled to transcribe, as the ultimate fates of two individuals, whose names have more than once been mentioned

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in the course of these memoirs, may there perhaps be discovered.

"Your anxiety, my dearest mother, and that of my father and Ellen, I can well understand, but for myself I had no fear. Had I been alone, I believe a species of pleasurable excitement would have been the prevailing feeling, but for my Louisa I did tremble very often; the scenes passing around us were, to a gentle eye and feeling heart, terrible indeed, and so suddenly they had come upon us, we had no time to attempt retreat to a place of greater safety. Cannon-balls were flying in all directions, shattering the windows, killing some, and fearfully wounding many others; for several hours I concealed Louisa in the cellar, which was the only secure abode our house presented. Mounted guards, to the number of six or seven hundred, were dashing down the various streets with a noise like thunder, diversified only by the clash of arms, the shrieks of the wounded, and the fierce cries of the populace It was indeed terrible—the butchery of lives has indeed been awful; in these sanguinary conflicts between desperate men, pent up in narrow streets, innocent lives have also been taken, for it was next to impossible to distinguish between those who took an active part in the affray, and those who were merely paralyzed spectators. In their own defence the gens d'armes were compelled to fire, and their artillery did fearful havoc among the people. * * * * *

Crossing the Quai de la Tournelle, at the commencement of the first day, I was startled by being addressed by name, and turning round, beheld, to my utter astonishment, Cecil Grahame at my elbow; he was in the uniform of a gend'arme, in which corps, he told me with some glee, his brother-in-law, Lord Alphingham, who was high in favor with the French court, had obtained him a commission; he spoke lightly, and with that same recklessness of spirit and want of principle which unfortunately has ever characterized him, declaring he was far better off than he had ever been in England, which country he hoped never to see again, as he utterly abhorred the very sight of it. The French people were rather more agreeable to live with; he could enjoy his pleasures without any confounded restraint. I suppose he saw how little I sympathized in his excited spirits, for, with a hoarse laugh and an oath of levity, he swore that I had not a bit more spirit in me than when I was a craven-hearted lad, always cringing before the frown of a saintly father, and therefore no fit companion

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for a jolly fellow like himself. 'Have you followed Herbert's example, and are you, too, a godly-minded parson? then, good day, and good riddance to you, my lad,' was the conclusion of his boisterous speech; and setting spurs to his horse, he would have galloped off, when I detained him to ask why he had not informed his family of his present place of abode and situation; my blood had boiled as he spoke, that rude and scurrilous lips should thus scornfully have spoken my sainted brother's name; passion rose fierce within me, but I thought of him whose name he spoke, and was calm. He swore that he had had quite enough of his father's severity, that he never meant to see his face again. He was now, thank heaven, his own master, and would take care to remain so; that he had been a fool to address me, as he might be sure I should tell of his doings, and bring the old fellow after him. Disgusted beyond measure, yet I could not forbear asking him if he had heard of his mother's death. Without the least change of countenance or of voice, he replied—

"'Heard of it, man, aye, and forgotten it by this; why, it is some centuries ago. It would have been a good thing for me had she died years before she did.'

"'Cecil Grahame!' I exclaimed, in a tone that rung in my ears some hours afterwards, and I believe made him start, daring even as he was; 'do you know it is your mother of whom you speak? a mother whose only fault towards you was too much love, a mother whose too fond heart your cruel conduct broke; are you so completely devoid of feeling that not even this can move you?'

"'Pray add to your long list of my good mother's perfections a weakness that ruined me, that made me the wretch I am,' he wildly exclaimed; and he clenched his hand and bit his lip till the blood came, while his cheek became livid with some feeling I could not fathom. He spurred his horse violently, the spirited animal started forward, a kind of spell seemed to rivet my eyes upon him. There was a loud report of cannon from the Place de Grêve, several balls whizzed closed by me, evidently fired to disperse the multitude, who were tumultuously assembling on the Pont de la Cité; and ere I could recover from the startling effects of the report, I heard a shrill scream of mortal agony, and Cecil Grahame fell from his horse a shattered corpse.

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For several minutes I was wholly unconscious of all that was

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passing around me. I stood by the body of the unfortunate young man, quite insensible to the danger I was incurring from the shot. I could only see him before my eyes, as I had known him in his boyhood and his earliest youth, full of fair promises, of hopeful futurity, the darling of his mother's eye, the pride of his father, spite of his faults; and now what was he? a mangled corpse, cut off without warning or preparation in his early youth. But, oh, worse, far worse than all, with the words of hatred, of defiance, on his lips. I sought in vain for life; there was no sign, no hope. To attempt to rescue the body was vain, the tumult was increasing fearfully around me; many gensd'ârmes were falling indiscriminately with the populace, and the countenance of Cecil was so fearfully disfigured, that to attempt to recognize it when all might again be quiet would, I knew, be useless. One effort I made, I inquired for and sought Lord Alphingham's hotel, intending to obtain his assistance in the proper interment of this unfortunate man, but this was equally frustrated, the hotel was closely shut up. Lord and Lady Alphingham had, at the earliest threatening of disturbances, retreated to their chateau in the province of Champagne. I forwarded the melancholy intelligence to them, and returned to my own hotel sick at heart with the sight I had witnessed. The fearful tone of his last words, the agonized shriek, rung in my ears as the shattered form and face floated before my eyes, with a tenacity no effort of my own or even of my Louisa's could dispel. Oh, my mother, what do I not owe you for guarding me from the temptations that have assailed this wretched young man, or rather for imprinting on my infant mind those principles which, with the blessing of our heavenly Father, have thus preserved me. Naturally, my temper, my passions, were like his, in nothing was I his superior; but it was your hand, your prayers, my mother, planted the seeds of virtue, your gentle firmness eradicated those faults which, had they been fostered by indulgence, might have rendered my life like Cecil Grahame's, and exposed me in the end to a death like his. What would have availed my father's judicious guidance, my brother's mild example, had not the soil been prepared by a mother's hand and watered by a mother's prayers? Blessings, a thousand blessings on your head, my mother! Oh may my children learn to bless theirs even as I do mine; they cannot know a purer joy on earth.

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"We have arrived at Rouen in safety. I am truly thankful to feel my beloved wife is far from the scene of confusion and danger to which she had been so unavoidably exposed. I am not deceived in her strength of nerve, my dear mother, I did not think, when I boasted of it as one of her truly valuable acquirements, I should so soon have seen it put to the proof; to her letter to Caroline I refer you for all entertaining matter.

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"I have been interrupted by an interview as unexpected as it promises to be gratifying. One dear to us all may, at length, rejoice there is hope; but I dare not say too much, for the health of this unhappy young man is so shattered, he may never yet embrace his mother. But to be more explicit, I was engaged in writing, unconsciously with the door of my apartment half open, when I was roused by the voice of the waiter, exclaiming, 'Not that room, sir, if you please, yours is yonder.' I looked up and met the glance of a young man, whom, notwithstanding the long lapse of years, spite of faded form and attenuated features, I recognized on the instant. It was Alfred Greville. I was far more surprised and inconceivably more shocked than when Cecil Grahame crossed my path; I had marked no change in the features or the expression of the latter, but both in Alfred Greville were so totally altered, that he stood before me the living image of his sister, a likeness I had never perceived before. I was too much astonished to address him, and before I could frame words, he had sprung forward, with a burning flush on either cheek, and grasping my hand, wildly exclaimed, 'Do not shun me, Hamilton, I am not yet an utter reprobate. Tell me of my mother; does she live?"

"She does," I replied; instantly a burst of thanksgiving broke from his lips, at least so I imagined, from the expression of his features, for there were no articulate sounds, and a swoon resembling death immediately followed. Medical assistance was instantly procured, but though actual insensibility was not of long continuance, he is pronounced to be in such an utterly exhausted state, that we dare not encourage hopes for his final recovery; yet still I cannot but believe he will be spared—spared not only in health, but as a reformed and better man, to bless that mother, whose cares for him, despite long years of difficulties and sorrow, have never failed. In vain I entreated him not to exhaust himself by speaking:

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that I would not leave him, and if he would only be quiet, he might be better able on the morrow to tell me all he desired. He would not be checked; he might not, he said, be spared many hours, and he must speak ere he died. Comparatively speaking, but little actual vice has stained the conduct of Greville. Throughout all his career the remembrance of his mother has often, very often mingled in his gayest hours, and dashed them with remorseful bitterness. He owns that often of late years her image, and that of his sister Mary, have risen so mildly, so impressively before him, that he has flown almost like a maniac from the gay and heartless throngs, and as the thoughts of home and his infancy, when he first lisped out his boyish prayer by the side of his sister at his mother's knee, came thronging over him, he has sobbed and wept like a child. These feelings returned at length so often and so powerfully, that he felt to resist them was even more difficult and painful than to break from the flowery chains which his gay companions had woven round him. He declared his resolution; he resisted ridicule and persuasion. Almost for the first time in his life he remained steadily firm, and when he had indeed succeeded, and found himself some distance from the scenes of luxurious pleasures, he felt himself suddenly endowed with an elasticity of spirit, which he had not experienced for many a long year. The last tidings he had received of his mother and sister were that they were at Paris, and thither he determined to go, having parted from his companions at Florence. During the greater part of his journey to the French capital, he fancied his movements were watched by a stranger, gentlemanly in his appearance, and not refusing to enter into conversation when Greville accosted him; but still Alfred did not feel satisfied with his companionship, though to get rid of him seemed an impossibility, for however he changed his course, the day never passed without his shadow darkening Greville's path. Within about eighty miles of Paris, however, he lost all traces of him, and he then reproached himself for indulging in unnecessary fears. He was not in Paris two days, however, before, to his utter astonishment, he was arrested and thrown into prison on the charge of forging bank-notes, two years previous, to a very considerable amount. In vain he protested against the accusation, alleging at that time he had been in Italy and not in Paris. Notes bearing his own signature, and papers betraying other misdemeanors, were brought forward, and on their testimony and that of the stranger, whose

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name he found to be *Dupont*, he was thrown into prison to await his trial. To him the whole business was an impenetrable mystery. To us, my dear father, it is all clear as day. Poor Mrs. Greville's fears were certainly not without foundation, and when affairs are somewhat more quiet in Paris I shall leave no stone unturned to prove young Greville's perfect innocence to the public, and bring that wretch Dupont to the same justice to which his hatred would have condemned the son of his old companion. Alfred's agitation on hearing my explanation of the circumstance was extreme. The errors of his father appeared to fall heavily on him, and yet he uttered no word of reproach on his memory. The relation of his melancholy death, and the misery in which we found Mrs. Greville and poor Mary affected him so deeply, I dreaded their effect on his health; but this was nothing to his wretchedness when, by his repeated questions, he absolutely wrung from me the tale of his sister's death, his mother's desolation: no words can portray the extent of his self-reproach. It is misery to look upon him now, and feel what he might have been, had his mother been indeed permitted to exercise her rights. There is no happiness for Alfred Greville this side of the Channel; he pines for home—for his mother's blessing and forgiveness, and till he receives them, health will not—cannot return.

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In prison he remained for six long weary months, with the consciousness that, amidst the many light companions with whom he had associated, there was not one to whom he could appeal for friendship and assistance in his present situation, and the thoughts of his mother and sister returned with greater force, from the impossibility of learning any thing concerning them. The hope of escaping never left him, and with the assistance of a comrade, he finally effected it on the 27th of July, the confusion of the city aiding him far more effectually than he believed possible. He came down to Rouen in a coal-barge, so completely exhausted, that he declared, had not the thought of England and his mother been uppermost, he would gladly have laid down in the open streets to die. To England he felt impelled, he scarcely knew wherefore, save that he looked to us for the information he so ardently desired. Our family had often been among his waking visions, and this accounts for the agitation I witnessed when I first looked up. He said he felt he knew me, but he strove to move or speak in vain; he could not utter the only question he wished to frame, and was

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unable to depart without being convinced if I indeed were Percy Hamilton.

"'And now I have seen you, what have I learnt?' he said, as he ceased a tale, more of sorrow than of crime.

"'That your mother lives,' I replied, 'that she has never ceased to pray for and love her son, that you can yet be to her a blessing and support.'

"Should he wish her sent for, I asked, I knew she would not demand a second summons. He would not hear of it.

"'Not while I have life enough to seek her. What! bring her all these miles to me. My mother, my poor forsaken mother. Oh, no, if indeed I may not live, if strength be not granted me to seek her, then, then it will be time enough to think of beseeching her to come to me; but not while a hope of life remains, speak not of it, Percy. Let her know nothing of me, nothing, till I can implore her blessing on my knees.'

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"I have ceased to argue with him, for he is bent upon it, and perhaps it is better thus. His mind appears much relieved, he has passed a quiet night, and this morning the physician finds a wonderful improvement, wonderful to him perhaps, but not to me."

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Percy's letters containing the above extracts were productive of much interest to his friends at Oakwood. The details of Cecil's death, alleviated by sympathy, were forwarded to his father and sister. The words that had preceded his death, Mr. Hamilton carefully suppressed from his friend; and Mr. Grahame, as if dreading to hear any thing that could confirm his son's reckless disposition, asked no particulars. For three months he buried himself in increased seclusion at Llangwillan, refusing all invitations, and denying himself steadfastly to all. At the termination of that period, however, he once more joined his friends, an altered and a happier man. His misanthropy had departed, and often Mr. Hamilton remarked to his wife, that the Grahame of fifty resembled the Grahame of five-and-twenty far more than he had during the intervening years. Lilla and Edward were sources of such deep interest to him, that in their society he seemed to forget the misery occasioned by his other children. The shock of her brother's death was long felt by Lilla; she sorrowed that he was thus suddenly cut off without time for one thought of eternity, one word of penitence, of prayer. The affection of her husband, however,

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gradually drew from her these melancholy thoughts, and when Lord Delmont paid his promised visit to his nephew, he found no abatement in those light and joyous spirits which had at first attracted him towards Lilla.

Ellen, at her own particular request, had undertaken to prepare Mrs. Greville for the return of her son, and the change that had taken place in him. Each letter from Percy confirmed his recovery, and here we may notice, though somewhat out of place, as several months elapsed ere he was enabled fully to succeed, that, by the active exertions of himself and of the solicitor his father had originally employed, Dupont was at length brought to justice, his criminal machinations fully exposed to view, and the innocence of Alfred Greville, the son of the deceased, as fully established in the eyes of all men.

Gently and cautiously Ellen performed her office, and vain would be the effort to portray the feelings of the fond and desolate mother, as she anticipated the return of her long absent son. Of his own accord he came back to her; he had tried the pleasures of the world, and proved them hollow; he had formed friendships with the young, the gay, the bright, the lovely, and he had found them all wanting in stability and happiness Amid them all his heart had yearned for home and for domestic love; that mother had not prayed in vain.

Softly and beautifully fell the light of a setting sun around the pretty little cottage on the banks of the Dart, which was now the residence of Mrs. Greville; the lattice was thrown widely back, and the perfume of unnumbered flowers scented the apartment, which Ellen's hand had loved to decorate, that Mrs. Greville might often, very often forget she was indeed alone. It was the early part of September, and a delicious breeze passed by, bearing health and elasticity upon its wing, and breathing soft melody amid the trees and shrubs. Softly and calmly glided the smooth waters at the base of the garden. The green verandah running round the cottage was filled with beautiful exotics, which Ellen's hand had transported from the conservatory at Oakwood. It was a sweet and soothing sight to see how judiciously, how unassumingly Ellen devoted herself to the desolate mother, without once permitting that work of love to interfere with her still nearer, still dearer ties at home. She knew how Herbert would have loved and devoted himself to the mother of his Mary, and in this, as in all things, she followed in his steps. Untiringly would she listen to and speak on Mrs. Greville's favorite theme, her Mary; and now

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she sat beside her, enlivening by gentle converse the hours that must intervene ere Alfred came. There was an expression of such calm, such chastened thanksgiving on Mrs. Greville's features, changed as they were by years of sorrow, that none could gaze on her without a kindred feeling stealing over the heart, and in very truth those feelings seemed reflected on the young and lovely countenance beside her. A pensive yet a sweet and pleasing smile rested on Ellen's lips, and her dark eye shone softly bright in the light of sympathy. Beautiful, indeed were the orphan's features, but not the dazzling beauty of early youth. If a stranger had gazed on her countenance when in calm repose, he would have thought she had seen sorrow; but when that beaming smile of true benevolence, that eye of intellectual and soul-speaking beauty met his glance, as certain would he have felt that sorrow, whatever it might have been, indeed had lost its sting.

"It was such an evening, such an hour my Mary died," Mrs. Greville said, as she laid her hand in Ellen's. "I thought not then to have reflected on it with feelings such as now fill my heart. Oh, when I look back on my past years, and recall the prayers I have uttered in tears for my son, my Alfred, the doubts, the fears that have arisen to check my prayer, I wonder wherefore I am thus blessed."

"Our God is a God of truth, and He promiseth to answer prayer, dearest Mrs. Greville," replied Ellen, earnestly; "and He is a God of love, and will bless those who seek Him and trust in Him as you have done."

"He gave me grace to trust in Him, my child. I trusted, I doubted not He would answer me in another world, but I thought not such blessing was reserved for me in this. A God of love—ay, in the hour of affliction, I have felt Him so. Oh, may the blessings of His loving-kindness, showered down upon me, soften yet more my heart to receive His glorious image."

She ceased to speak, but her lips moved still as in inward prayer. Some few minutes elapsed, and suddenly the glowing light of the sun was darkened, as by an intervening shadow. The mother raised her head, and in another instant her son was at her feet.

"Mother, can you forgive me, receive me? Bid me not go forth—I cannot, may not leave you."

"Go forth, my son, my son—no, never, never!" she cried, and clasping him to her bosom, the quick glad tears fell fast

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upon his brow. She released him to gaze again and again upon his face, and fold him closer to her heart, to read in those sunken features, that faded form, the tale that he had come back to her heart and to her home, never, never more to leave her.

In that one moment years of error were forgotten. The mother only felt she held her son to her heart, a suffering, yet an altered and a better man; and he, that he knelt once more beside his mother, forgiven and beloved.

CONCLUSION.

And now, what can we more say? Will not the memoirs of the Hamilton family, and those intimately connected with them, indeed be deemed complete? It was our intention to trace in the first part of our tale, the cares, the joys, the sorrows of parental love, during the years of childhood and earliest youth; in the second, to mark the *effect* of those cares, when those on whom they were so lavishly bestowed, attained a period of life in which it depends more upon themselves than on their parents to frame their own happiness or misery, as far, at least, as we ourselves can do so. It may please our Almighty Father to darken our earthly course by the trial of adversity, and yet that peace founded on religion, which it was Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton's first care to inculcate, may seldom be disturbed. It may please Him to bless us with prosperity, but from characters such as Annie Grahame happiness is a perpetual exile, which no prosperity has power to recall. We have followed Mr. Hamilton's family from childhood, we have known them from their earliest years, and now that it has become their parts to feel those same cares and joys, and perform those precious but solemn duties which we have watched in Mrs. Hamilton, our task is done; and we must bid farewell to those we have known and loved so long; those whom we have seen the happy inmates of one home, o'er whom—

"The same fond mother bent at night,"

who shared the same joys, the same cares, whose deepest affections were confined to their parents and each other, are now scattered in different parts of their native land, distinct members of society, each with his own individual cares and joys, with new and precious ties to divide that heart whose whole

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affection had once been centred in one spot and in one circle, and can we be accused, in thus terminating our simple annals, of wandering from the real course of life? Is it not thus with very many families of England? Are not marriage and death twined hand in hand, to render that home desolate which once resounded with the laugh of many gleesome hearts, with the glad tones of youthful revelling and joy? True, in those halls they often meet again, and the hearts of the parents are not lone, for the family of each child is a source of inexpressible interest to them; there is still a link, a precious link to bind them together, but vain and difficult would be the attempt to continue the history of a family when thus dispersed. Sweet and pleasing the task to watch the unfledged nestlings while under a mother's fostering wing, but when they spread their wings and fly, where is the eye or pen that can follow them on their eager way?

Once more, but once, we will glance within the halls of Oakwood, and then will we bid them farewell, for our task will be done, and the last desires of fancy, we trust, to have appeased.

It was in September, of the year 1830, we closed our narrative. Let us then, for one moment, imagine the veil of fancy is upraised on the first day of the year 1838, and gaze within that self-same room, which twenty years before we had seen lighted up on a similar occasion, the anniversary of a new year, bright with youthful beauty, and enlivened by the silvery laugh of early childhood. But few, very few, were the strangers that this night mingled with Mr. Hamilton's family. It was not, as it had been twenty years previous, a children's ball, on which we glance. It was but the happy reunion of every member of that truly happy family; and the lovely mirthful children there assembled, were, with the exception of a very few, closely connected one with another, by the near relationship of brothers, sisters, and cousins. In Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, Mrs. Greville, Montrose Grahame, Lucy Harcourt, and Mr. Moreton, who were all present, time had, comparatively made but little difference; but it was in those who, twenty years before, had so well acted the part of youthful entertainers to their various guests, that the change was striking, yet far, very far from being mournful.

On one side might be seen Percy Hamilton, M. P., in earnest yet pleasurable conversation with Mr. Grahame. It was generally noticed that these two gentlemen were always talking

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politics, discussing, whenever they met, the affairs of the nation, for no senator was more earnest and interested in his vocation than Percy Hamilton, but certainly on this night there was no thoughtful gravity of a senator imprinted on his brow; he was looking and laughing at the childish efforts of the little Lord Manvers, eldest child of the Earl of Delmont, then in his seventh year, to emulate the ease and dignity of his cousins, Lord Lyle and Herbert and Allan Myrvin, some two or three years older than himself, who, from being rather more often at Oakwood, considered themselves quite lords of the soil and masters of the ceremonies, during the present night at least. The ladies Mary and Gertrude Lyle, distinguished by the perfect simplicity of their dress, had each twined an arm in that of the gentle, retiring Caroline Myrvin, and tried to draw her from her young mother's side, where, somewhat abashed at the number that night assembled in her grandfather's hall, she seemed determined to remain, while a younger sister frolicked about the room, making friends with all, in such wild exuberance of spirits, that Mrs. Myrvin's gentle voice was more than once raised in playful reproach to reduce her to order, while her husband and Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton seemed to take delight in her movements of elasticity and joy. The Countess St. Eval, as majestic and fascinating in womanhood, as her early youth had promised, one moment watched with a proud yet softly flashing eye the graceful movements of her son, and the next, was conversing eagerly and gayly with her brother Percy and the young Earl of Delmont, who were standing near her; seven years had wrought but little change in him, who till now we have only known by the simple designation of Edward Fortescue. Manhood, in its prime, had rather increased than lessened the extreme beauty of his face and form; few gazed on him once but turned to gaze again; and the little smiling cherub of five years, whose soft round arms were twined round Miss Fortescue's neck, the Lady Ellen Fortescue, promised fair to inherit all her father's beauty and peculiar grace, and endeared her to her young mother's heart with an increased warmth of love, while the dark flashing eyes of Lord Manvers, and his glossy, flowing, ebon curls rendered him, Edward declared, the perfect likeness of his mother, and therefore he was the father's pet. Round Mr. Hamilton were grouped, in attitudes which an artist might have been glad to catch for natural grace, about three or four younger grandchildren, the eldest not exceeding four years, who, too young to join in the dance

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and sports of their elder brethren, were listening with eager attention to the entertaining stories grandpapa was relating calling forth peals of laughter from his infant auditors, particularly from the fine curly-headed boy who was installed on the seat of honor, Mr. Hamilton's knee, being the only child of Percy and Louisa, and consequently the pet of all. It was to that group Herbert Myrvin wished to confine the attention of his merry little sister, who, however, did not choose to be so governed, and frisked about from one group to another, regardless of her graver brother's warning glances; one minute seated on Mrs. Hamilton's knee and nestling her little head on her bosom, the next pulling her uncle Lord St. Eval's coat, to make him turn round and play with her, and then running away with a wild and ringing laugh.

"Do not look so anxious, my own Emmeline," Mrs. Hamilton said fondly, as she met her daughter's glance fixed somewhat anxiously on her little Minnie, for so she was generally called, to distinguish her from Lady St. Eval's Mary. "You will have no trouble to check those wild spirits when there is need to do so; her heart is like your own, and then sweet is the task of rearing."

With all the grateful fondness of earlier years did Mrs. Myrvin look up in her mother's face, as she thus spoke, and press her hand in hers.

"Not even yet have you ceased to penetrate my thoughts, my dearest mother," she replied; "from childhood unto the present hour you have read my countenance as an open book."

"And have not you, too, learned that lesson, my child? Is it not to you, your gentle, timid Caroline clings most fondly? Is it not to you Herbert comes with his favorite book, and Allan with his tales of glee; Minnie's mirth is not complete unless she meets your smile, and even little Florence looks for some sign of sympathy. You have not found the task so difficult that you should wonder I should love it?"

"For those beloved ones, oh, what would I not do?" said Mrs. Myrvin, in a tone of animated fervor, and turning her glistening eyes to her mother, she added, "My own mother, marriage may bring with it new ties, new joys, but, oh, who can say it severs the first bright links of life between a mother and a child? it is now, only now, I feel how much you loved me"

"May your children be to you what mine have ever been to me, my Emmeline; I can wish you no greater blessing," replied Mrs. Hamilton, in a tone of deep emotion, and twining

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Emmeline's arm in hers, they joined Mrs. Greville and Miss Harcourt, who were standing together near the pianoforte, where Edith Seymour, the latter's younger niece, a pleasing girl of seventeen, was good-naturedly playing the music of the various dances which Lord Lyle and Herbert Myrvin were calling in rapid succession. In another part of the room Alfred Greville and Laura Seymour were engaged in such earnest conversation, that Lord Delmont indulged in more than one joke at their expense, of which, however, they were perfectly unconscious; and this had occurred so often, that many of Mrs. Greville's friends entertained the hope of seeing the happiness, now so softly and calmly imprinted on her expressive features, very shortly brightened by the union of her now truly estimable son with an amiable and accomplished young woman, fitted in all respects to supply the place of the daughter she had lost.

And what had these seven years done for the Countess of Delmont, who had completely won the delighted kiss and smiles of Minnie Myrvin, by joining in all her frolics, and finally accepting Allan's blushing invitation, and joining the waltz with him, to the admiration of all the children? The girlish vivacity of Lilla Grahame had not deserted Lady Delmont; conjugal and maternal love had indeed softened and subdued a nature, which in early years had been perhaps too petulant; had heightened yet chastened sensibility. Never was happiness more visibly impressed or more keenly felt than by the youthful Countess. Her husband, in his extreme fondness, had so fostered her at times almost childish glee, that he might have unfitted her for her duties, had not the mild counsels, the example of his sister, Miss Fortescue, turned aside the threatening danger, and to all the fascination of early childhood Lady Delmont united the more solid and enduring qualities of pious, well-regulated womanhood.

"I wonder Charles is not jealous," observed Mrs. Percy Hamilton, playfully, after admiring to Lord Delmont his wife's peculiar grace in waltzing. "Allan seems to have claimed her attention entirely."

"Charles has something better to do," replied his father, laughing, as the little Lord Manvers flew by him, with his arm twined round his cousin Gertrude in the inspiring gallop, and seemed to have neither ear nor eye for any one or any thing else. "Caroline, do you permit your daughter to play the coquette so early?"

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"Better at seven than seventeen, Edward, believe me; had she numbered the latter, I might be rather more uneasy, at present I can admire that pretty little pair without any such feeling. Gertrude told me to-day, she did not like to see her cousin Charles so shy, and she should do all she could to make him as much at home as she and Leslie are."

"She has succeeded, then, admirably," replied Edward, laughing, "for the little rogue has not much shyness in him now. Herbert and Mary have got that corner all to themselves; I should like to go slily behind them, and find out what they are talking about."

"Try and remember what you used to talk about to your partners in this very room, some twenty years back, and perhaps recollection will satisfy your curiosity," said Lady St. Eval, smiling, but faintly, however; the names Herbert and Mary, had recalled a time when those names had often been joined before, and the silent prayer arose that their fates might not resemble those whose names they bore, that they might be spared a longer time to bless those who loved them.

"Twenty years back, Caroline, what an undertaking! Allan is more like the madcap I was then, so I can better enter into his feelings of pleasure. By the by, why are not Mrs. Cameron's family here to-night? I half expected to meet them here yesterday."

"They spend this season with Sir Walter and Lady Cameron in Scotland," replied Lady St. Eval. "Florence declared she would take no excuse; the Marquis and Marchioness of Malvern, with Emily and Louis, are there also, and Lady Alford is to join them in a week or two."

"You were there last summer, were you not?"

"We were. They are one of the happiest couples I know, and their estate is most beautiful. Florence declares that, were Sir Walter Scott still living, she intended to have made him take her for a heroine, her husband for a hero, and transport them some centuries back, to figure on that same romantic estate in some very exciting scenes."

"Had he killed Cameron's first love, and rendered him desperate, and made Florence some consoling spirit, to remove his despair, instead of making him so unromantically enabled to conquer his passion, because unreturned? Why I could make as good a story as Sir Walter himself; if she will reward me liberally, I will set about it."

"It will never do, Lord Delmont, it is much too common-

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place," said Mrs. Percy Hamilton, smiling. "It is a very improper question, I allow, but who was Sir Walter's first love?"

"Do you not know? A certain friend of yours whom I torment, by declaring she is invulnerable to the little god's arrows," he answered, joyously.

"She may be invulnerable to Cupid, but certainly not to any other kind of love," remarked Lady St. Eval, as she smilingly pointed out to Mrs. Percy's notice Miss Fortescue, surrounded by a group of children, and bearing on her expressive countenance unanswerable evidences of her interest in the happiness of all around her."

"And is it possible, after loving *her* he could love another?" she exclaimed, in unfeigned astonishment.

"Disagreeably unromantic, Louisa, is it not?" said Lord Delmont, laughing heartily; "but what was the poor man to do? Ellen was inexorable, and refused to bestow on him any thing but her friendship."

"Which he truly values," interrupted Lady St. Eval. "You must allow, Louisa, he was wise, however free from romance; the character of Florence, in many points, very much resembles Ellen's. She is one of the very few whom I do not wonder at his choosing, after what had passed. Do you know, Edward, Flora Cameron marries in the spring?"

"I heard something about it; tell me who to.

She complied, and Percy and Mr. Grahame joining them, the conversation extended to more general topics.

"Nay, Allan, dear, do not tease your sister," was Miss Fortescue's gentle remonstrance, as Allan endeavored, somewhat roughly, to draw Minnie from her side, where, however, she clung with a pertinacity no persuasion or reproach could shake.

"She will hurt Ellen," replied the boy, sturdily, "and she has no right to take her place by you."

"But she may stand here too, there is room for us both;" interrupted the little Ellen, though she did not offer to give up her place in her aunt's lap to her cousin.

"Go away, Allan, I choose to stand here, and aunt Ellen says I may," was Minnie's somewhat impatient rejoinder, as she tried to push her brother away, though her pretty little features expressed no ill-temper on the occasion, for she laughed as she spoke.

"Aunt Ellen promised to dance with me," retorted Allan, and so I will not go away unless she comes too."

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